


THE
PALACE BEAUTIFUL AND
OTHER POEMS (1865)



ORPHEUS C. KERR

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THE
PALACE BEAUTIFUL,
AND
Other Poems.

By ORPHEUS C. KERR.



NEW YORK:
Carleton, Publisher, 413 Broadway.
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E. CRAIGHHEAD,
Printer, Stereotyper, and Electrotyper,
Carlton Building,
91, 93, and 95 Centre Street.

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To

MY MOTHER.

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THE PALACE BEAUTIFUL.

LORD MOST SUPREME, whose image is the man
Of Reason, wedded to the vestal Truth,
Teach me, beyond the mortal veil of youth,
To trace Life's perfect compensating plan.

Why burns the torch of morning on the hills,
That catch the blazing roses of its gleams,
When subtle darkness falls between the beams,
And all the world with haunted shadow fills?

Why blooms the dew-decoying rose of red,
And sheds its fragrance in the laughing light;
When weeping tempests, prison'd in a night,
Are pent, to burst upon its modest head?

Why scales of vernal armor clothe the tree,
And hide the flutter of its singing heart,
When Winter cometh, with his icy dart,
To set th' imprison'd soul of Nature free?

Why glows the burning Soul in Summer love,
And fondly dreams an everlasting Now,
While snows of death are falling on the brow,
That draws its worship from the Throne above?

These are but idle questions, heart of mine;
For, in the narrow limits of thy range,
Behold how wisely ev'ry perfect change
Is made the record of a Pow'r benign.

The darkest night cannot obscure the ray
That eastward heralds of the coming morn;
And from the darkness is a glory born,
To crown the temples of another day.

Deep in the fragrant casket of its heart,
The blushing rose secretes a beam of light,
That pales beneath the storm-shod heel of night,
Yet shines anew when shadows all depart.

A singing heart returns unto the tree,
When second life has come with newer Spring;
And though its voice hath not the olden ring,
'Tis still the blended notes of melody.

New buds of passion rise within the soul,
From where the first-born Passion buried lies;
And as the cypress of remembrance dies,
The lily's cup receives the tears that roll.

Aid me, thou mystic Sprite of Poesy,
To catch the inspiration of the scene,
And draw a picture of what lies between
The Thought Invisible and things we see!

The Palace Beautiful! Oh, goodly sight,—
As like a queen in ermine robes it stood,
With radiance bursting from it in a flood,
Like morning scatter'd from embodied light.

Its turrets caught the early smiles of day,
And from the twinkling windows in its walls,
Soft notes of music fell, as music falls
Through bird-lit vistas of the woodland spray.

Flow'rs—lovely flow'rs!—imperial purple blent
With blush distilled from off the velvet cheek,
Transparent, glowing with the fires that speak
Of virgin modesty, and love half spent;

And golden ashes of the morning hours,
With shadeless purity, that hides the dew;
And polished emerald, that waveth through
The pillar'd temple of a thousand flow'rs;—

All roll'd in silent beauty at the base,
Twining a veil of fragrance with the air,
Impalpable to all but angels fair,
And yet the guardian-spirit of the place.

And he who called this bright domain his own,
Had made the faultless structure laugh at time;
For each retainer reckoned it a crime
To let the dust of ages blot a stone.

The sculptur'd images above the gates,
The jewel'd bindings of the turrets tall,
And all the matchless tracings of the wall,
Knew no declining from their earliest states.

For lo! the Master lived; and while he felt
The strength of manhood in his bosom bide,
He made the Palace wear a guise of pride,
And girt its beauties with a living belt.

The lofty ramparts seem'd to share his will,
And on their shining fronts there did appear
A fix'd, unyielding, yet a graceful sneer
At ev'ry object lower than a hill.

Thus, wrapt in wondrous glory, did it rest—
The Palace Beautiful—the shrine of Love!
And in the blissful cooing of a dove,
There lurk'd the secret of Divine behest.

One day, a Trav'ler stood before the gate;
In youth unaided by the hope of youth,
And, in his folly, blinded to the truth,
That to be satisfied is to be great.

With head inclined he stood, and hand to shade
The cold, blue eyes, that could not bear the sight
Of beauty floating in a sea of light,
And in a native majesty arrayed.

Fix'd in an attitude of wild surprise,
And ev'ry feature stamp'd with Passion's brand,
He clutch'd his throbbing bosom with his hand,
And breath'd the fire that blazed within his eyes.

“ Why must I seek the hovel for my home,
And toil forever near the sordid earth ?
As though the mighty God that gave me birth,
Made me, than other men, of baser loam !

“ He made me peer of kings, by kingly plan ;
Nor ever wore a king a nobler crown,
Than by the King of Kings is wafted down,
To grace the forehead of the Honest man.

“ Why stand I here a stranger, and alone,
While he whose blessings in yon palace shine,
Hath not a heart more true to heart than mine,
Nor lordly nature of a higher tone ?

“ O Palace Beautiful ! thou art my goal ;
And thou my Heav’n, so near the heav’n above,
That I would yield to thee my all of love,
And with idolatry defile my soul !

“ What though there dungeons be, and blackness dire,
Far down beneath thy lustrous beauty’s rays ?
There is enough of light in all thy ways,
To blind my spirit in its holy fire !

“Is there no humble spot within thy walls,
In lonely sanctity well guarded still,
Where I may enter of mine own free will,
And feel the subtle warmth that in it falls?”

He ceased. No answer came, nor echo fell
To blend the words of passion in its tone;
But chilling silence reign'd on Nature's throne,
And all of Nature's voices owned the spell.

The sneer majestic on the ramparts high,
Seemed deep'ning to the wrinkles of a smile;
And scornful laughter, shaken out the while
From lordly pennants, floated mocking by.

Then turn'd the stranger from that Palace fair,
A baneful arrow rankling in his heart,
That bled afresh when he would fain depart,
And slowly poison'd while he lingered there.

Now, mark the change a single year may bring!
A single year, that, roll'd by tyrant Time,
May crush a virtue and extend a crime—
Give birth to peasant, and the grave a king.

In starless blackness, at the midnight stroke,
While day was treading on the heels of day,
A soul of honor shed its chains of clay,
And from its prison-house in silence broke.

Up to the skies it took its fearless course,
Where volley'd thunder welcomed its return,
And linkèd lightning never ceased to burn
Around the foot-prints of its pallid horse.

But, in a chamber of the Palace fair,
A kingly form was motionless and still
As faultless statue cut from marble chill,
And gazing upward with a leaden stare.

The Palace Beautiful! No longer bright,
Save where a single window casement shed
An inward gloom upon the fallen head—
An outward ray upon the sullen night.

And in the storm there fell upon the ear
An echo terrible and full of woe,
That through the haunted darkness seem'd to go,
The disembodied Spirit of a Tear.

Morn came at last ; and not the morn that breaks
To gladden nature with another joy ;
But such a morn as feels the night's alloy,
And half of darkness, half of light partakes.

The Palace Beautiful, without a lord,
Look'd down to where its flow'ry courtiers, shorn
Of all their glories in the sunshine worn,
Had spurn'd the velvet and unsheath'd the sword !

The Master gone ! The will that govern'd all,
Thrown from its lofty pedestal of might,
To lose its vital essence in a night,
And yield the robe of empire for a pall.

O Palace fair ! the sword that sprang for thee
Will never more maintain thy queenly state ;
And soon the bold invaders at thy gate
Will tame the spirit of thy majesty !

Another year sped on. The lonely man—
The trav'ler stood again before the door,
With head inclined, and eyelids brimming o'er
With tears, that kiss'd and wedded as they ran.

Not then those eyes required a hand to shade ;
For death had gather'd all the sunshine down
To fill the measure of an angel's crown,
When he his visit to the master paid.

Again the stranger spoke ; but not in wrath,
Nor envy, impotent to move the soul,
But in such tender, wooing words as roll
When sorrow lingers on the lover's path :

" O Palace Beautiful ! in all thy gloom,
Far lovelier to my eyes than e'er before,
Take thou the pallid sentry from thy door,
And bury all thy shadows in the tomb.

" Why keep the sable banner on thy wall,
To show the world how desolate thou art ?
Can it restore new life unto the heart
That once could count its throbbings in thy hall ?

" Be mine, O Palace Beautiful, the task
To win the fickle sunshine back to thee,
And well defend thy native majesty.
A home in thee is all the right I ask."

A note of trembling melody he heard—
Not like the artful breathing of the lyre,
Nor like a sound that sets the soul on fire ;
But like the timid whisper of a bird.

Softly, as roll the fleecy clouds of Spring,
The gates turn'd inward, only to disclose
That 'neath the dome a mighty mirror 'rose,
Reflecting back the image of a king !

'Twas He !—the trav'ler, but no more alone ;
For Love was with him, and the love of man
Is God within him, shaping ev'ry plan
To rear, preserve, and beautify His throne.

As by the magic of a wizard's staff,
A sea of roses shut the gates behind ;
And on the fragrant billows of the wind,
There roll'd the silv'ry fabric of a laugh.

Then fell the blush of sunset on the place ;
And, by the storm of sorrow undefiled,
Approving Nature caught the glow and smiled,
While yet the tear-drops glitter'd on her face.

SPRING VIOLETS UNDER THE SNOW.

NOTHING is lost that has beauty to save,
Purity rises in flow'rs from the grave,
And from the blossoms that fade on the tree
Falleth the seed of the blossoms to be ;
Life unto Death is mortality's growth,
Something immortal is under them both :
Surely as cometh the Winter, I know
There are Spring violets under the snow.

See the old man in his great easy-chair,
Furrow'd his forehead and white is his hair :
Yet, as he roguishly smiles to his dame,
Pointing her eyes to the lovers, whose shame
Makes them withdraw from the light of the fire,
Boyhood, light-hearted, reveals in the sire !
Surely as cometh life's Winter, I know
There are Spring violets under the snow.

See the old wife in her kerchief and cap,
Dropping her knitting-work into her lap,
While, with a laugh that is silent, she shakes,
And o'er her shoulder another peep takes :
Years are full forty since she was a Miss,
Yet she's a girl in that overheard kiss !
Surely as cometh life's Winter, I know
There are Spring violets under the snow.

See the Old People, with nods of delight,
Stealing together away for the night,
Ever too fond and too cunning to own
Why they should leave the shy lovers alone ;
But their eyes, twinkling, are telling the truth—
Down in their hearts is an answering youth !
Surely as cometh life's Winter, I know
There are Spring violets under the snow !

THE MAN OF FEELING.

ALAS! for him whose simple soul,
A garden cherish'd by the sun,
Lies open to the public way,
For every foot to tread upon.

And whether in a wanton mood,
Or by a selfish purpose led,
Each passer tramples on the verge
Where all his tenderest feelings spread.

And then his wounded nature feels—
What his alone can understand,
The flow'r that's broken by the heel,
Can ne'er be mended by the hand.

From gentle instinct taught to love
The meanest creature of his race,
He took his image of the World
When God was shining in his face;

Nor dream'd that earth could wear a Cross,
Save, as it fell, while glory blazed,
The noonday Shadow of a Christ,
With arms in Benediction raised.

And not 'till bleeding from the world,
He learns the heartless world it is;
That ruder souls the gentler crush,
And all are rude to such as his.

Though turning to his fellow-men,
With hope in each a friend to meet,
He stands as lonely as a tree
Upon a city's stony street;

For, ever to the open hand,
The perfect trust, the guileless air,
Not even Charity is kind,
And Manhood doubts a Man is there.

Then, shrinking stricken to himself,
With silent grieving desolate,
He lives a coward to the wind,
And fears the things he cannot hate.

There is a sinking of his soul,
A sudden shock of age and care ;
As one who in a mirror sees
The first gray streaking of his hair.

And growing tremulous with dread
Of what one word, one look may be,
He dares not seek to make a friend,
Lest love should die of jealousy.

Thus, friendless and alone he goes,
To none a prize, to all a prey ;
Like water dripping on a rock,
By trifles wears his life away.

And yet there is an inward light
To keep his soul from growing dark,
Through which his nature's incense breaks,
Like music breaking from the lark ;

For, though the world sweeps coldly by,
Or pauses but to cast a dart,
There's something cannot chill nor die—
His grand simplicity of heart !

AGE BLUNTLY CONSIDERED.

AS Age advances, ails and aches attend,
Backs builded broadest burdensomely bend;
Cuttingly cruel comes consuming Care,
Dealing delusions, drivelry, despair.

Empty endeavor enervately ends,
Fancy forlornly feigns forgotten friends;
Gout, grimly griping, gluttonously great,
Hastens humanity's hard-hearted hate.

Intentions imbecile invent ideas
Justly jocunding jolly jokers' jeers:
Knowledge—keen kingdom knurlyably known—
Lingers, lamenting life's long lasting loan.

Mammonly mumming, magnifying motes,
Nurtures numb Nature's narrowest nursery notes,
Opens old Ogre's odious offering out—
Peevish punctilio, parrot-pining pout.

Qualmishly querying, quarrelsomely quaint,
Rousing rife ridicule's repealed restraint;
Speaking soft silliness—such shallow show,
That tottering toysters, tickled, titter too.

Useless, ungainly, unbelov'd, unblest,
Virtue's vague visor, vice's veiling vest,
Wheezingly whimpering, wanting wisdom, wit,
'Xistence, 'Xigent, 'Xclaims—'Xit!

Youths, you're yclept youth's youngest; yet you'll yield
Zestless zig-zaggers, zanyable zealed.



ASPASIA.

UNDER the branches whose blossoms are fire,
 Gathering thrones in her glances—
Queen of the lilies that nod to the rose,
 Catching its color by chances;
Treading a universe under her feet,
 Lo! where the goddess advances.

Pearls are asleep in the waves of her hair,
 Gems on her bosom are dreaming;
And from the smouldering worlds of her eyes
 Glories of ruin are gleaming—
Glories that glow from the ashes of hearts,
 With a smile over them beaming!

Rich is the fabric that falls to her feet,
 Rare are its labyrinth laces;
Deep in their brightness the jewels her heart
 Throbs into meteor races,
Each in its beauty the torch of a grace,
 Lighting the temple of graces.

This is her Court in the Kingdom of Night,
Princes are bending before her ;
Nobles and warriors wall her around,
Ready to serve and adore her ;
Even the sage breathes the incense of love
Cast by her majesty o'er her.

Is she not sanctified ? Mark how the priest,
Heedless of all that he preaches,
Under the shallow disguise of the world
Wooes her with silvery speeches !
He is a man, and the heart in his breast
Lives on the lesson she teaches.

What is the sternness and strength of a man,
Barbarous, monkish, or knightly,
When the Imperial Passion commands,
Ruleth it ever so lightly ?
Naught but a tottering wall of defence
Rendering weakness unsightly !

Beauty may dwell in the statue of stone,
As in the living Circassian ;
But in the beautiful sculpture of God
Is there what no man can fashion—

Life that is light bringing blindness to men,
From the high altar, of Passion.

Here is the priestess and here is the queen,
Fairest the light can illumine ;
Worship'd by man in the highest estates
Granted on earth to the human ;
But to her altar and unto her throne
Cometh no form of a woman.

Woe to the maiden, or mother, or wife,
Tempted by pity to name her !
Even a thought of the sisterless one,
Charity-given, would shame her ;
Mothers may speak of the motherless one,
Only to shudder and blame her.

She, by her mind, is too high for her sex—
She, by her life, is below it ;
And if the medium rests in her soul,
Woman disdaineth to know it ;
Charity, mark'd by a sneer of the world,
Findeth no woman to show it !

She, in Philosophy's fathomless spring,
Bathed her unsatisfied spirit ;

Yearning for that which is not of the earth.
Taking what seem'd to be near it,
Ere to her youth came the voice of the world,
Warning her spirit to fear it.

(Life is a harp for the spirit to play,
Given by God to his creature ;
But by the pride that is virtue in man,
Ruling his every feature,
All of its music is given to Art—
None to the throbbings of Nature.)

By the FIRST IMPULSE she lives and is lost !
Sacrificed unto the error,
That to the earliest good in the soul
All the round world is a mirror ;
Virtue the motive of every delight,
Vice a perpetual terror.

Pure at the first, she were pure at the last,
Had her mind's purity met her ;
But it was Falsehood, in Honor's disguise,
That with illusions beset her,
Feigning a moment the truth of her soul,
Only to rivet its fetter.

Think of her, then, in her womanless court,
 Maidens with sisters and mothers !
 Think of her, lonely, with hundreds around,
 Maidens with fathers and brothers !
 Think of her, truthful and pure in herself,
 Lost by the falsehood of others !

Under the branches whose blossoms are fire,
 Gathering thrones in her glances—
 Queen of the lilies that nod to the rose,
 Catching its color by chances ;
 Treading a universe under her feet,
 Lo ! where the goddess advances.

CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADIERS.

THE Southern hosts are up in arms !
The olive branch no longer charms,
And over cities, prairies, farms,
The martial trumpet rings.
A single spark has lit the North,
Her hearts of valor hurry forth,
And, with a soldier's spirit wroth,
Each man to harness springs.

From East to West the cry has gone :
The pledge is broke, the sword is drawn,
And now the moment dread comes on,
That all our honor proves.
A score of millions hear the cry ;
Six hundred thousand marching by,
Give back, in thunder tones, reply :
Our banner southward moves !

Then pours the hurrying tide of war,
The billowy smoke, the cannon's roar,
The bayonet's lightning-flash before,
 The Standard's sunset glow ;
And over all the tumult comes
The trumpet's bray, the roll of drums ;
While, from the lowland distance hums
 The echo of the foe.

Blow, bugles, blow ! the charge begins ;
Now God uphold the arm that wins,
And look with mercy on the sins
 Of those who fall to-day ;
A glorious stake is in the fight,
A nation's life, a nation's right ;
And where her 'champions' blows alight,
 There let the vanquish'd pray !

A sudden pause, a sudden hush ;
The mighty boulder, launch'd to crush,
Hangs, like a feather on a bush,
 In fathomless suspense :
As though an avalanche, half hurl'd
Upon a nether Alpine world,
Were caught, where first it downward swirl'd,
 Upon a saving fence !

In mid-career the armies stand,
Each by the other's breathing fann'd,
While all around them smokes the land

 Their iron heels have trod.

The gunner's lanyard slacken'd droops,
The horseman to his sabre stoops,
The hostile captains eye their troops,

 With many a thoughtful nod.

To this the strife has come at last,
That, in the texture of the blast,
A mighty flaw should overcast

 The rushing Ship of State,

And hold her in a leaden calm,
While her defenders found the balm
To keep her safe from ev'ry harm,

 Or else, defer her fate.

Deep quiet reigns along the lines,
The midnight frowns, the noonday shines ;
But still Bellona's great designs

 Are left to other men ;

For, in a field where gods might choose
To sip the fountains of the dews,
The Brigadiers, in fearless crews,

 Renew the strife again.

They meet the foemen face to face—

Who loses now shall win disgrace ;

For on his strength to keep his place

His land's salvation hangs !—

They scan each other through the glass,

From rank to rank the watchwords pass,

Then, pressing forward in a mass,

The goblet mortar clangs !

“ Load up with bricks ! ” the leader said,

Ere half the earliest round had sped,

“ And truly aim at every head

Above the table-land.”

Their duty well the gunners know,

The volley'd corks at angles go,

And pours the grape with such a flow

No mortal man can stand.

Lo ! Sherry flashes to the front,

With Bourbon's self to share the brunt,

And valiant Southside, old and blunt,

Stands out to meet them there.

Now hasten ! hasten while ye can,

Old burly, clumsy Rhenish man ;

For Heidsick comes to lead the van,

And falter then who dare !

Cabana's battery 's in reserve,
With steady fire our charge to nerve ;
Who would a coward be, and swerve
 Before the lighted match ?
Already reels the foe, struck dumb,
Scarce knowing whence his wounds have come ;—
One other charge, Imperial Mumm,
 And over goes a batch !

Now from Regalia's lengthy nines,
Rolls up the smoke in circling lines,
And half concealing, half defines
 Full many staggering forms ;
And, badly wounded in the neck,
With naught their dying falls to check,
The Brigadiers go down in wreck,
 As ships go down in storms.

When brightly beams the morning sun,
And Peace, by doughty vict'ry won,
Once more the Nation rests upon,
 Like sunlight on the grass ;
Columbia, through her happy tears,
Shall thank her gallant Brigadiers,
And then go on, for years and years,
 To tax—the broken glass.

ALONE.

THREE stalwart sons old Sweyn, the Saxon, had,
Brave, hardy lads for battle, or the chase ;
And though, like peasant, barbarously clad,
Each wore the Nameless Noble in his face :
One o'er another rose their heads in tiers,
Steps for their father's honorable years.

One night in Autumn sat they round the fire,
In the rude cabin bountiful of Home ;
Mild by the rev'rence due from child to sire,
Bold in the manhood unto mast'ry come ;
Working their tasks o'er huntsman's forest gear,
Loos'ning the bow and sharpening the spear.

Lost in his thoughts, old Sweyn, the Saxon, stood,
Leaning in silence 'gainst the chimney stone ;
Staring unconscious at the blazing wood,
Steep'd in the mood of mind he oft had known ;
As an old tree whose stoutest branches shake,
Scarce from their vigor sign of life will take.

Athol, the bearded, with his bow had done,
Alfred, the nimble, laid his spear aside,
Edric, the fairest, tiring of his fun,
Left the old hound to slumber on his hide ;
Yet was their sire like one whose features seem
Shaded by sleep, and all their light a dream.

Bold in the favor of the eldest born,
Athol, for both his younger brothers, spoke :
" Father, the fox is prowling in the corn,
And hear the night-owl hooting from the oak ;
Let us to couch." But Sweyn had raised his head,
And thus, unwitting what had pass'd, he said :—

" See, from my breast, I draw this chain of gold"—
Fair in the firelight royally it shone,—
" This for his honor that shall best unfold
Who, of all creatures, is the most Alone ;
Take him from palace, monast'ry, or cot,
Loving unloved, forgetting, or forgot."

Then Athol spoke, with thoughtful tone and look ;
" He is the loneliest—most Alone of all,
Who, in a skiff to the mid-seas forsook,
Finds not an echo, even, to his call ;

If Echo lived, not all Alone were he ;
But there's no echo on the solemn Sea !”

And Alfred next :—“ But lonelier, brother, far,
The wretch that flies a just avenging rod
To him all scenes are wastes, a foe the star,
All earth he's lost, yet knows no heav'n, no God ;
Most Lonely he, who, making man his foe,
Unto man's Maker dareth not to go !”

Thus spoke the lads, with wit beyond their years ;
And yet the old man held his beard and sigh'd,
As one who gains the form his wishing wears,
But misses still a something most denied ;
Upon his youngest eager looks he turned,
And Edric's cheek with grace ingenuous burned.

“ I think, my father”—and his tones were low,
“ That lonelier yet, and most Alone, is he,
Scarce taught, though crowds are leading, where to go,
And one face missing can no other see ;
Though all the Norman's court around him moves,
He is Alone apart from Her he loves.”

A hush fell on them. Then, with loving air
And all the touching romance of the Old,
The hoary father kiss'd young Edric's hair,
And o'er his shoulders threw the chain of gold;
Then fell upon his darling's neck and cried :
" I have been Lonely since thy Mother died !"

AVENGED.

GOD'S scales of Justice hang between
The deed Unjust and the end Unseen,
And the sparrow's fall in the one is weigh'd
By the Lord's own Hand in the other laid.

In the prairie path to our Sunset gate,
In the flow'ring heart of a new-born State,
Are the hopes of an old man's wauing years,
'Neath headstones worn by an old man's tears.

When the bright sun sinks in the rose-lipp'd West,
His last red ray is the headstone's crest ;
And the mounds he laves in a crimson flood,
Are a Soldier's wealth baptized in blood !

Do ye ask who rear'd those headstones there,
And crown'd with thorns a sire's grey hair?
And by whom the Land's great debt was paid
To the Soldier old, in the graves they made?

Shrink, Pity! shrink, at the question dire;
And, Honor, burn in a blush of fire!
Turn, Angel, turn from the page thine eyes,
Or the Sin, once written, never dies!

They were men of the Land he had fought to save
From a foreign foe that had cross'd the wave,
When his sunlit youth was a martial song,
And shook a throne as it swell'd along.

They were sons of the clime whose soft, warm breath
Is the soul of earth, and a life in death;
Where the Summer dreams on the couch of Spring,
And the songs of birds through the whole year ring;

Where the falling leaf is the cup that grew
To catch the gems of the new leaf's dew,
And the winds that through the vine-leaves creep
Are the sighs of Time in a pleasant sleep.

But there lurk'd a taint in the clime so blest,
Like a serpent coil'd in a ring-dove's nest,
And the human sounds to the ear it gave,
Were the clank of chains on a low-brow'd Slave !

The Soldier old, at his sentry-post,
Where the sun's last trail of light is lost,
Beheld the shame of the Land he loved,
And the old old love in his bosom moved.

He cried to the land, Beware, Beware
Of the symbol'd Curse in the Bondman there !
And a prophet's soul in fire came down
To live in the voice of old John Brown.

He cried ; and the ingrate answer came
In words of steel from a tongue of flame ;
They dyed his hearth in the blood of kin,
And his dear ones fell for the Nation's Sin !

Oh, matchless deed ! that a fiend might scorn,
Oh, deed of shame ! for a world to mourn ;
A Soldier's pay in his blood most dear,
And a land to mock at a Father's tear !

Is't strange that the tranquil soul of age
Was turn'd to strife in a madman's rage ?
Is't strange that the cry of blood did seem
Like the roll of drums in a martial dream ?

Is't strange the clank of the Helot's chain
Should drive the Wrong to the old man's brain,
To fire his heart with a santon's zeal,
And mate his arm to the Soldier's steel ?

The bane of Wrong to its depth had gone,
And the sword of Right from its sheath was drawn ;
But the cabin'd Slave heard not his cry,
And the old man arm'd him but to die.

Ye may call him Mad, that he did not quail
When his stout blade broke on the unblest mail ;
Ye may call him Mad, that he struck alone,
And made the land's dark Curse his own ;

But the Eye of God look'd down and saw
A just life lost by an unjust law ;
And black was the day with God's own frown
When the Southern Cross was a martyr's Crown !

Apostate clime ! the blood then shed,
Fell thick with vengeance on thy head,
To weigh it down 'neath the coming rod
When thy red right hand should be stretch'd to God.

Behold the price of the life ye took ;
At the death ye gave 'twas a world that shook ;
And the despot deed that one heart broke,
From their slavish sleep a Million woke !

Not all alone did the victim fall,
Whose wrongs first brought him to your thrall ;
The old man play'd a Nation's part,
And ye struck your blow at a Nation's heart !

The freemen-host is at your door,
And a Voice goes forth with a stern " No More !"
To the deadly Curse, whose swift redeem
Was the vision'd thought of John Brown's dream.

To the Country's Wrong, and the Country's stain,
It shall prove as the scythe to the yielding grain ;
And the dauntless pow'r to spread it forth,
Is the free-born soul of the chainless North.

From the East, and West, and North they come,
To the bugle's call and the roll of drum ;
And a form walks viewless by their side—
A form that was born when the Old Man died !

The Soldier old in his grave may rest,
Afar with his dead in the prairie West ;
But a red ray falls on the headstone there,
Like a God's reply to a Soldier's pray'r.

He may sleep in peace 'neath the greenwood pall,
For the land's great heart hath heard his call ;
And a people's Will and a people's Might,
Shall right the Wrong and proclaim the Right.

The foe may howl at the fiat just,
And gnash his fangs in the trodden dust ;
But the battle leaves his bark a wreck,
And the Freeman's heel is on his neck.

Not all in vain is the lesson taught,
That a great soul's Dream is the world's New Thought ;
And the Scaffold mark'd with a death sublime
Is the Throne ordain'd for the coming time.



THE SOLDIER'S EPITAPH.

THE woodlands caught the airy fire upon their vernal
plumes,

And echo'd back the waterfall's exultant, trilling laugh,
And through the branches fell the light in slender golden
blooms

To write upon the sylvan stream the Naiad's epitaph.

On either side the sleeping vale the mountains swell'd
away,

Each, bred of Nature's lore, a grand and solitary sage ;
And brightly in the teeming plain the river went astray,
Like an exhaustless vein of Youth wound through a green
Old Age.

The turtle woo'd his gentle mate, where thickest hung the
boughs,

While round them fell the blossoms pluck'd by robins'
wanton bills;

And on its wings the zephyr caught the music of his
vows,

To waft a strain responsive to the chorus of the hills.

'Twas in a nook beside the stream where grapes in clusters
fell,

And 'twixt the trees the swaying vines were lost in leafy
showers,

That fauns and satyrs, tamed to rest beneath the noonday
spell,

Gave silent ear and witness to the meeting of the
flowers.

The glories of the fields were there in summer's bright
array,

The virgins of the temple vast where Noon to Ev'ning
nods,

To crown as queen of all the rest whose bosom should dis-
play

The signet of a mission blest, the cipher of the gods.

The royal Lily's sceptred cup besought an airy lip,
The Rose's stooping coyness told the bee was at her
heart,
While all the other sisters round, with many a dainty
dip,
Sought jewels hidden in the grass, and waved its spears
apart.

"We seek a queen," the Lily said, "and she shall wear the
crown
Who to the Mission of the Blest the fairest right shall
prove;
For unto her, whoe'er she be, has come in sunlight
down
The badge of Nature's Royalty, from angel hands
above.

"I go to deck the wreath that binds a fair, imperial
brow,
Whose whiteness shall not be the less that mine is purer
still;
For though a band of sparkling gems is set upon it now,
'Twill be the fairer that the Church in me beholds her
will."

"I claim a loyal suitor's touch," the Rose ingenuous said,
 "And he will choose me when he seeks the bow'r of
 lady fair,
To match me, with a smile, against her cheek's betraying
 red,
 And place me, with a kiss, within the shadows of her
 hair."

And next the proud Camellia spoke: "Where festal music
 swells,
 And solemn priest, with gown and book, a knot eternal
 ties,
I go to hold the veil of her who hears her marriage-
 bells,
And pledges all her life unto the Love that never dies."

The Laurels raised their glowing heads, and into language
 broke:
 "'Tis ours to honor gallant deeds that awe a crouching
 world;
We rest upon the warrior's helm when fades the battle's
 smoke,
And bloom perennial on the shield that back the foeman
 hurled."

And other sisters of the field, the woodland, and the vale,
Each told the story of her work, and glorified her quest ;
But none of all the noble ones had yet reveal'd the tale,
That taught them from the gods she wore the signet in
her breast.

At length the zephyr raised a leaf, the lowliest of the low,
And there, behold a Violet the Spring let careless slip ;
Beyond its season blooming there where newer beauties
grow,
Enshrined like an immortal thought that lives beyond
the lip.

"We greet thy presence, little one," the graceful Lily said,
And quiver'd with a silent laugh behind her snowy
screen,

"Upraise unto the open sun thy modest little head ;
For here, perchance, in thee at last the Flow'rs have
found their queen."

A tremor shook the timid flower, and soft her answer
came ;

"'Tis but a simple duty left to one so small as I ;
And yet I would not yield it up for all the higher fame
Of nodding on a hero's helm, or catching beauty's eye.

"I go to where an humble mound uprises in a field,
To mark the place of one whose life was lost a land to save ;
Where banner'd pomp no birth attests, nor marbled sword
nor shield ;

I go to deck," the Violet said, "a simple soldier's grave."

There fell a hush on all the flowers ; but from a distant grove
Burst forth the anthem of the birds in one grand peal of
praise ;

As though the stern old Forest's heart had found its early
love,

And all of earth's sublimity was melted in its lays !

Then, as the modest flower upturn'd her blue eyes to the
sun,

There fell a dewdrop on her breast, as shaken from a tree ;
The lowliest of the sisterhood the godlike Crown had won ;
For hers it was to consecrate Truth's Immortality.

The woodlands caught the airy fire upon their vernal
plumes,

And echo'd back the waterfall's exultant, trilling laugh ;
And through the branches fell the light in slender golden
blooms,

To sanctify the Violet, the Soldier's Epitaph.

SUMMER.

THE fickle year is in its golden prime ;
The world is dreaming in a hazy lustre,
And round the altars of our Summer clime,
The blushing roses cluster.

Upon the mountain dwells impassion'd light,
And in the valley sleeps a shade depressing
While fields of waving wealth enchant the sight,
Like gold of God's own blessing.

The ploughman rests beneath the wayside tree,
The stream curls slowly round the hoofs of cattle ;
And o'er the meadow floats the droning bee,
Fresh from his flowery battle.

Soft through the Southern meshes of the vine,
I hear the birds unto each other calling ;
And in the casket of the eglantine
The tropic dews are falling.

Far in the distance rolls the sluggish sea,
With not enough of life in all its breathing
To bid the sail from its rude bonds go free,
And spurn its hempen wreathing.

On all there rests a halo and a hush,
The spell of poesy is on the blossom,
And Nature's spirit slumbers in a blush,
Caught from high Heaven's bosom.

The Past and Future blend in one sweet sleep,
The world's a dream, and Care a hidden mummer,
Whose tears, however sadly he may weep,
Are but the dews of Summer.

COSMO-BELLA.

THE roseate Morning, with girdles of light,
Has lifted the hills from the wave of the night,
And crown'd with a halo, and mantled in grey,
Retires to the mist and gives birth to a day.

What bird shall be first from his covert to spring,
And o'er the nativity earliest sing ?
What flower shall be first, in the valley below,
To breathe out her dew in the coronal glow ?

No bird of the mountain, no rose of the vale,
Shall earliest carol and blush with the tale ;
For soft, through the hush of God blessing the scene,
Come feathery footfalls, the steps of a queen.

She comes ! and the purity lapt in the hour
Takes presence and form in the beauty her dow'r ;
She stands at her mirror, a hill-dripping stream,
And all the round world sees her smile in a dream.

Search not through the lands, from the Poles to the Zone,
In quest of the Beauty one nation may own ;
For all the Globe's gifts of perfection appear
In Beauty's Ideal, the Innocence here.

The Sea hoards a gem, and the Sky garners rays,
The one is her soul, and the others her ways ;
And Nature, adoring, beholds in her eyes
The blue of the sea in the light of the skies.

Her features, illumed with the star-beam of Peace,
Are lined to the Art-worship'd contour of Greece ;
And England's red roses, that grew in her glance,
Are blent on her cheek with the lilies of France.

The bloom of Circassia, the grace of Cathay,
Her lips move to life and her form gives a sway ;
And white gleams her bosom through shadows of lawn,
The snow of the Alps in the pearl of the dawn.

The first golden circle the Tyrol to light,
Thrown off like a ring from the finger of night,
Has crumbled to dust in a summery air,
And scatter'd a day in the folds of her hair.

She stands with one foot in a thought of advance,
A foot on the velvet of roses to dance;
And, jewel'd with glittering dew, is display'd
The high-arching instep of Switzerland's maid.

Proud Europe, soft Asia, and Africa far,
She gathers your beauties wherever they are,
And wearing them modestly, blesses our sight,
The Daughter of Morning, an Angel of light.

THE FALLS.

I.

DROPS of water—
Limpid water !

Sparkling, darkling, steeping, creeping,
Through the grassy lattice peeping,
Like the royal elfin's eyes,
When on sever'd leaf he lies ;
Trickling on in blending balls,
Flowing,
Going,
With a murmur, to the Falls.

II.

Rills of water—
Childish water !

Shiv'ring, quiv'ring, straying, playing,
Where the sober stones are staying ;

Rocking lilies up and down,
Bearing many a foamy crown,
Through the lonely woodland halls;
 Sliding,
 Gliding
Far away to join the Falls.

III.

Sheets of water,—
Laughing water!
Hissing, kissing, wrinkling, twinkling,
With a clear, melodious tinkling,
Deep reflecting banner clouds,
Furl'd above, like vessel shrouds,
When the shadow on them crawls;
 Tossing,
 Crossing,
To the music of the Falls.

IV.

Folds of water—
Crystal water!
Dashing, splashing, whirling, curling,
Neptune's standard wide unfurling,

In a charge a-down the hill.
Where the rocks are lying still,
In their moss-encrusted stalls,
 Jutting,
 Cutting
Liquid ribbons for the Falls.

V.

Streams of water—
Rushing water !
Roaring, pouring, gleaming, streaming,
Like a mighty river dreaming
Of a tempest on the sea,
Sweeping down in midnight glee
From the crested ocean walls ;
 Boiling,
 Toiling,
To the volume of the Falls.

VL

Floods of water—
Surging water !
Moaning, groaning, wailing, railing,
While the ancient tree is failing,

Like a straying soldier lost,
Bending to an armed host ;
Sounding martial bugle calls,
 Gushing,
 Rushing
To the battle of the Falls.

VII.

Hosts of water—
Madden'd water !
Rumbling, tumbling, sweeping, leaping,
Carnival of rivers keeping,
Breaking, with resistless might,
From the cloud-surrounded height,
Form'd in sinking crystal walls ;
 Wreathing,
 Seething,
With the thunder of the Falls.

VIII.

Veils of water—
Tinted water !
Weaving, cleaving, vining, twining,
All a magic arch designing,

Painted with the glowing dyes,
Of Italia's ev'ning skies,
And of Fairies' em'rald palls;
 Blending,
 Bending,
In a bow across the Falls.

ENGLAND TO AMERICA.

WESTWARD, westward flies the eagle, westward with
the setting sun,
To an eyrie growing golden in a morning just begun ;
Where the world is new in promise of a virgin nation's
love,
And the grand results of ages germs of nobler ages prove ;

Where a prophecy of greatness runs through all the soul
of youth,
And the miracle of Freedom blesses in a living truth ;
Where the centuries unnumber'd narrow to a single night,
And their trophies are but planets wheeling round a central
light.

Where the headlands breast the Ocean sweeping round
creation's East,
And the prairies roll in blossoms to the Ocean of the
West;

Where the voices of the seas are blended o'er a nation's
birth,
In the harmony of Nature's hymn to Liberty on earth.

Land of Promise! Revelation of a royalty that springs
From a grander depth of purple than the heritage of
kings—
From the inner purple cherish'd at the thrones of lives
sublime,
Cast in glorious consecration 'neath the plough of Father
Time—

Home of Freedom, hope of millions born and slain and yet
to be,
Shall the spirit of the bondless, caught from heaven, fail in
thee?
Shall the watching world behold thee falling from thy
starry height?
Like a meteor, in thine ending leaving only darker
night!

Oh! my kinsmen, Oh! my brothers—fellow-heirs of Saxon
hearts,

Lo, the Eagle quits his eyrie swifter than a swallow darts,
And the lurid flame of battle burns within his angry eye,
Glowing like a living ember cast in vengeance from the
sky.

At thy hearth a foe has risen, fiercer yet to burn and kill,
That he was thy chosen brother—friend no more, but
brother still;

For the bitter tide of hatred deeper runs and fiercer grows,
As the pleading voice of Nature addeth self-reproach to
blows.

Strike! and in the ghastly horrors of a fratricidal war,
Learn the folly of thy wanderings from the guiding North-
ern Star;

What were all thy gains and glories, to creation's fatal loss
In thy Freedom's crucifixion on the cruel Southern Cross?

Oh! my brothers narrow-sighted—Oh! my brothers slow
to hear

What the phantoms of the fallen ever whisper in the ear;
God is just, and from the ruins of the temple rent in twain
Rises up the invocation of a warning breathed in vain.

All thy pillars reel around thee from the fury of the blow,
And the fires upon thine altars fade and flicker to and fro ;
Call the vigor of thy manhood into arms from head to foot,
Strike ! and in thy strife with error let the blow be at the
root.

So thy war shall wear the glory of a purpose to refine
From the dross of early folly all the honor that is thine ;
So thine arms shall gather friendship to the standard of a
cause,
Blending in its grand approval British hearts and British laws.

Form thy heroes into armies from the mart and from the
field,
And their ranks shall stretch around thee in a bristling,
living shield ;
Take the loyal beggar's offer ; for the war whose cause is
just
Breathes the soul of noblest daring into forms of meanest
dust.

Let thy daughters wreath their chaplets for the foreheads
of the brave,
Let thy daughters trace their lineage from the patriot's
honor'd grave ;

Woman's love is built the strongest when it rests on
woman's pride,
Better be a soldier's widow than a meek civilian's bride.

Onward let thine Eagles lead thee, where the livid Southern
sun
Courts the incense for the heavens of a righteous battle
won ;
And the bright Potomac, winding through the fields unto
the sea,
Shall no longer mark the libel—what is bound and what is
free.

Rising from the fierce ordeal, wash'd in blood and purified,
See the future stretch before thee, limitless on every side ;
And in all the deep'ning envy of the nations wed to sloth,
Mark the record of thy progress, see the mirror of thy
growth.

Rising from thy purifying, like a giant from his rest,
Thou shalt find thy praise an echo from the East unto the
West ;
Thou shalt find thy love a message from the South unto
the North,
Each its past mistake of duty finding out and casting forth.

And thy States in new communion, by the blood they all
have shed,

Shall be wedded to each other in the pardon of the dead ;
Each, a scale of steel to cover vital part from foreign wrong,
All, a coat of armor guarding that to which they All belong.

Thou shalt measure seas with navies, span the earth with
iron rails,

Catch the dawn upon thy banner and the sunset on thy
sails ;

Northern halls of ice shall echo to thy sailor's merry note,
And the standard of thy soldier o'er the Southern isle shall
float.

Turning to thy mother, England, thou shalt find her mak-
ing boast

Of the Great Republic westward, born of strength that she
has lost ;

And thy Saxon blood shall join ye, never to be torn apart,
Moving onward to the future, hand in hand and heart to
heart.

A SONG FOR THE UNSUNG.

NOT often man's nature revealeth in tears
The springs of affection o'ergrown with his years
Not often the rock of his spirit will shrink
To yield what a world may be dying to drink ;
Yet comes there to me, as it ever will come,
Enshrined in my dreams of the altar at home,
One face that I cry for—so sweet when it smiled !—
My Sister, my Sister, you make me a child.

As music that falls, with no singer to word,
As rain blessing earth when no thunder is heard,
As light that still lingers when set is the sun,
As soft sounds that echo through silence begun ;

So cometh the trust of thy heart into mine,
So answers my spirit the pleadings of thine ;
So speak for us both to the witnessing skies,
My Sister, my Sister, thy worshiping eyes.

My friend and companion through years that are gone,
As gentle as twilight, as pure as the dawn,
The thought that's an eagle while roaming world-free
Is turned to a dove when it nestles with thee ;
And folding its wings in thy beautiful truth,
Renews on thy bosom its passionless youth,
And blesses the hand ever soothing its rest—
My Sister, my Sister, my truest and best.

When parents grew stern that a child should annoy,
How fondly you pled for the passionate boy ;
How patiently bearing what angels might fret,
To soothe me in sickness, I cannot forget.
My life has its record of good and of ill,
With those to applaud and to censure at will ;
But ever where thine was the finger to trace,
My Sister, my Sister, how perfect the grace !

The friendship that rides on the wave of the world
Is mine while the sails of my bark are unfurl'd,

And wafts me along o'er a mid-summer sea
To havens where Fortune sits waiting for me ;
But Oh, should the tempest break over my head,
What hands would be lifted, what pray'r would be said,
To save from the last falling stroke of the rod ?
My Sister, my Sister, thine only—to God.

Oh, call it not Love that I give unto thee ;
For love, like a feverish sun on the sea,
Is only a blossom of light from the seed
Of stars that were sown when the night was in need ;
A growth from the darkness to dwindle once more
And break into atoms, then bloom as before,
An endless unrest ever changing above,—
My Sister, my Sister, it cannot be Love.

But call it a name, that if spoken in pray'r
Would waft no alloy of the earth through the air ;
A name by an impulse of reverence giv'n
To something all fair with the beauty of Heav'n ;
A name whose soft incense of truth shall impart
A fragrance refined in the dews of the heart.
So pure is the feeling, though simple it be,
My Sister, my Sister, I give unto thee.

'Tis sweet to remember the moments gone by,
When more was the pow'r in a glance of thine eye
To hold me from evil perverting the will,
Than blows, that in childhood a manhood may kill.
And if in the future my destiny turns
To paths where the thorn is the finger that spurns,
Though others may scorn what I seem unto them,
My Sister, my Sister, thou wilt not condemn.

For still, though I leave thee, thy spirit will shine
A Bethlehem Star o'er the journey of mine,
And lead it from perils where luxuries nod
To find in a manger the glory of God.
While burneth a planet that Star shall be there,
The rent in the heavens where enter'd a pray'r,
When kneeling at even' thy form I could see—
My Sister, my Sister, that pray'r was for me !

If aught to offend thee I do while I live,
Forgive me ! forgive me ! and God will forgive ;
Not His to withhold from the suppliant's cry,
While thine is the tenderness watching His eye.
And as I go down in the valley of death,
Once more but a child at his earliest breath,
My soul's dying impulse shall thrill through the night,
My Sister, my Sister, to kiss thee Good-Night.



"PICCIOLA."

IT was a Sergeant old and gray,
Well singed and bronzed from siege and pillage,
Went tramping in an army's wake,
Along the turnpike of the village.

For days and nights the winding host
Had through the little place been marching,
And ever loud the rustics cheer'd,
'Till ev'ry throat was hoarse and parching.

The Squire and Farmer, maid and dame,
All took the sight's electric stirring,
And hats were waved and staves were sung,
And kerchiefs white were countless whirling.

They only saw a gallant show
Of heroes stalwart under banners,
And in the fierce heroic glow,
'Twas theirs to yield but wild hosannas.

The Sergeant heard the shrill hurrahs,
Where he behind in step was keeping ;
But glancing down beside the road
He saw a little maid sit weeping.

" And how is this ?" he gruffly said,
A moment pausing to regard her ;—
" Why weepest thou, my little chit ?"—
And then she only cried the harder.

" And how is this, my little chit ?"
The sturdy trooper straight repeated,
" When all the village cheers us on,
That you, in tears, apart are seated ?

" We march two hundred thousand strong,
And that's a sight, my baby beauty,
To quicken silence into song
And glorify the soldier's duty."

"It's very, very grand, I know,"

The little maid gave soft replying ;

"And Father, Mother, Brother too,

All say 'Hurrah' while I am crying ;

"But think—O Mr. Soldier, think,

How many little sisters' brothers

Are going all away to fight

And may be *kill'd*, as well as others !"

"Why bless thee, child," the Sergeant said,

His brawny hand her curls caressing,

"'Tis left for little ones like thee

To find that War's not all a blessing."

And "Bless thee !" once again he cried ;

Then clear'd his throat and look'd indignant,

And march'd away with wrinkled brow

To stop the struggling tear benignant.

And still the ringing shouts went up

From doorway, thatch, and fields of tillage ;

The pall behind the standard seen

By one alone, of all the village.

The oak and cedar bend and writhe
When roars the wind through gap and braken;
But 'tis the tenderest reed of all
That trembles first when Earth is shaken.

DOLCE FAR NIENTE.

I.

STILL as a fly in amber, hangs the world
In a transparent sphere of golden hours,
With not enough of life in all the air
To stir the shadows or to move the flow'rs ;
And in the halo broods the angel Sleep,
Woo'd from the bosom of the midnight deep
By her sweet sister Silence, wed to Noon.

II.

Held in a soft suspense of summer light,
The gen'rous fields with all their bloom of wealth
Bask in a dream of Plenty for the years,
And breathe the languor of untroubled Health.

Without a ripple stands the yellow wheat,
Like the Broad Seal of God upon the sheet
Where Labor's signature appeareth soon.

III.

As printed staves of thankful Nature's hymn,
The fence of rails a soothing grace devotes,
With clinging vines for bass and treble clefs
And wrens and robins here and there for notes ;—
Spread out in bars, at equal distance met,
As though the whole bright summer scene were set
To the unutter'd melody of Rest !

IV.

Along the hill in light voluptuous wrapt
The daisy droops amid the staring grass,
And on the plain the rose and lily wait
For Flora's whispers, that no longer pass ;
While in the shade the violet of blue
Finds in the stillness reigning nature through,
That which her gentle modesty loves best.

V.

The mill-wheel motionless o'ershades the pool,
In whose frail crystal cups its circle dips ;
The stream, slow curling, wanders in the sun
And drains his kisses with its silver lips ;
The birch canoe upon its shadow lies,
The pike's last bubble on the water dies,
The water lily sleeps upon her glass.

VI.

Here let me linger, in that waking sleep
Whose dreams are all untinged with haunting dread
Of Morning's finger on the eyelids pressed,
To rouse the soul and leave the vision dead.
And while deep sunk in this soft ecstasy
I count the pulse of Heaven dreamily,
Let all life's bitterness behind me pass !

VII.

How still each leaf of my oak canopy,
That holds a forest syllable at heart,
Yet cannot stir enough in all its veins
To give the murmur'd woodland sentence start !

So still—so still all nature far and near,
As though the world had check'd its breath to hear
An angel's message from the distant skies !

VIII.

This one last glance at earth—one, only one—
To see, as through a veil, the gentle face
Bent o'er me softly, with a timid love
That half distrusts the sleep which gives it grace.
The thought that bids mine eyelids half unclose
Fades to a dream, and out from Summer goes,
In the brown Autumn of her drooping eyes.

THE PERFECT HUSBAND.

AS Light unto the Morn,
So Time to him unfolds her ;
As holds the light the day,
So unto him he holds her.
A fairer than himself,
By One still brighter given,
A something less of earth—
A something more of Heaven.

He deems her not a Saint—
In loving she is human—
And as he is a Man,
The dearer she as Woman.
Not down on her he looks,
Nor up to an Ideal,

But straight into her eyes,
And all his love is real.

As bends the sturdy tree
To shade a pool of water,
But standeth like a rock
When wind and torrent slaughter ;
So bends he unto her
When gentlest her controlling,
So stands he as a wall
When dangers round are rolling.

'Tis not by given Right,
Or Privilege, he rules her ;
For 'tis his grace to yield,
That in obeying schools her ;
And if the less himself
From troublous cause, or other,
In milder type he wears
The spirit of his Mother.

As she may have a fault,
So he may have a greater,

And sorrow for his own
For both is expiator ;
And if upon her sleeve
She snares a passing folly,
He frights it with a smile,
And not with melancholy.

He slaves her truth to him
By no confining portal,
But in himself reflects
Its counterpart immortal.
The freedom that he gives,
Is taken from the donor :
A Husband's faith may rest
Upon a Husband's honor.

And ever as a child,
When childish she, he chides her,
And ever as a man,
When she is strong, he guides her :
Through sunshine and through shade,
Through blessing and disaster,
In more than name, her Friend,
In less than law, her Master.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

I.

ON the far borders of the dimming world
Gleam the last brands of watch-fires, kindled when
The hosts of day, retreating, paused and furl'd
Their shining Standard in the sea ; and then,
Sullen and ready for the strife again,
Lit the cloud-cities of the yielded plain
To conflagration vengeful, mocking men
With the flame-eaten palace, arch and fane,
Of whose red grandeur, now, but smould'ring clouds
remain.

II.

Already creep the stealthy scouts of Night
Along the shadows by the Ocean cast,
With Midnight at its heart, against the height
Where broods th' eternal Mother of the Vast :

Each vail'd in coming dreams of what is past—
Yet dropping from their mantles, as they crawl,
Bright, Virgin jewels, polish'd by the blast,
And marking out in kingdoms, where they fall,
A sleep-reflected heritage for one—for all.

III.

Alas! the drowsy lids of yesterday
Closed on a scene, that, like a bosom fair,
Was fit to gather down such Peace, and pray
That it might never garner less of care;
But now, the dead day's ashes in the air
Melt through a tainted twilight on the field,
Where Peace sits mourning, with dishevel'd hair
And blood-shot eyes, o'er Mercy's broken shield—
Peace made the slave of War; Mercy, of Death the
yield!

IV.

Through the new eve like a disorder'd pall
Stretches the broken ground, with awful lines
Of human shape in ev'ry rise and fall;
Here, the bow'd head in dreadful sleep reclines;

There, a stout arm with other arms entwines ;
And, yonder, mark the semblance of a form
Twisted and wrench'd in all the mad designs
Of a young tree, made jester to the storm :
Ice to the touch, that hand—'twill ne'er again be warm !

V.

Thousands on thousands, far and near they lie,
Lover and foe, pursuer and pursued—
Some with glazed eyeballs, glaring at the sky,
And some—as though with sudden grief imbued
By the last scene their eyes in dying view'd—
Prone with their ghastly faces to the earth ;
And some, with life's hot rage in death renew'd,
In the death-stare immortalizing mirth.
O age without a soul, to give such horrors birth !

VI.

Yonder the battery, all shatter'd, lies ;
And here the drum, by some wild weapon torn ;
And ev'rywhere the charger, black with flies,
Puts the poor dignity of man to scorn

And blends his blood with that of noblest born.
Join'd in the grim democracy of war,
Rider and horse, soldier, and sword once worn,
Find no degrees when the fierce battle o'er
Leaves them in equal graves—slain, broken, used no
more.

VII.

The burly Guardsman, at his captain's feet,
Still the bent musket holds, with iron grip,
As though more eager yet the foe to meet—
Because blood gloves the hand upon his hip,
And, in the rigid tension of his lip,
Lurks the one sentence God alone may speak.
Soldier, thy bravery hath made a slip,
And borne thee with it where no foemen seek
To test the strength once thine—the strength now less than
weak.

VIII.

And thou, poor Stripling! with the girlish hair,
And hand so white around the pond'rous hilt,
It seems like Beauty, taken in a snare—
What dost thou here, with death around thee built

In such close prison, for the Nation's guilt?
Oh! for a mother's hope—a sister's dream—
That died in darkness, when the blood was spilt
In whose warm current dwelt the living beam
God made to brighten Age, with its own youth's redeem.

IX.

Gone are the conquering banners of the day—
Hush'd the grand roar of the artillery—
And perish'd all the pomp and brave display
That mask'd the Battle in mad revelry!
Gone is the smoke that hid the battery;
And of th' immortal lightning-fire that bloom'd
Upon a field of bayonets for thee,
And mark'd thee, Soldier, with the ones it doomed,
These ashes poor remain—to blend, to be entomb'd.

X.

Draw, gentle Night, thy curtains closer round,
And fly, ye clouds, to hide the rising moon
From the white faces staring from the ground.
The morning light will come, alas! too soon.

That its fair beam must cancel all the boon
Of countless hearts, to whom the Night is hope
For blest escape of loved ones, who, at noon,
Reel'd in the charge, and fell upon the slope.
Leave them one feeble stay, with their despair to cope !

XI.

To-morrow all the land, from North to South,
May ring with echoes of a Battle won ;
The rose may blossom at the cannon's mouth,
And trumpet honors unto Peace be done ;
But, from his ramparts, will the rising Sun
See where the carrion-crows expectant flit ;
And while to crown her, worlds have just begun,
The Nation, sick at heart remembering it,
Shall, at her bloody hearth, in dust and ashes sit.

MIDSUMMER.

MOODILY a drowsy glory,
Shed from pinions plumed in light,
Held in quiet spell around me,
Vails my sight.

Sleepily the rose and lily
Nod along the garden wall ;
Little care they for the future,
If at all.

Listlessly the dainty zephyr
Ripples down the yellow field,
Saucily exposing daisies
Half conceal'd.

Heavily the wood keeps swaying,
Giving many a sleepy start,
While a little bird talks music
To its heart.

Languidly the weary river
Curls its silver in the sun,
While its thousand water-dimples
Blend in one.

Wearily the ox is dozing,
Right amid the bearded wheat,
Winking at the blue-bird tripping
Round his feet.

Cozily old Dobbin feedeth
In the shadow of the oak,
With the easy halter lying
Where it broke.

Drowsily above the meadow
Hums the vagrant, careless fly;
Can it be he is as lazy
Half as I?

Dreamily I watch the Summer
Planting sunlight where she will ;
May her beaming presence leave me
Dreaming still !

THE VILLAGE PASTOR.

AS burns a torch in some ancestral hall,
Where statues ghostly cluster by the wall ;
Each taking trembling motion in the light
And wearing shape familiar to the sight,
While over all contending shadows draw
A breathing twilight and a brooding awe ;
So burneth memory's censer in the mind,
Guide of the living to the dead design'd ;
So casts its tender, tributary beams
O'er the kind faces dear to childhood's dreams ;
So draws them tremulously from the gloom
Enthroned impenetrable round the tomb,
And to each form such moving semblance gives,
That, in the shadows, once again it lives.

Touch'd by the gentle, melancholy ray,
Years, like a mist at morning, roll away,
And, in the rising picture of the past,
Self unto self is face to face at last.

Once more, a child, I tread the village rounds
And listen fondly to remember'd sounds ;
Once more is echo'd from the fragrant dell
The measured ringing of the Sabbath bell ;
Once more I totter at my mother's side
And view my Sunday suit with guileless pride,
While she in accents of instructive love,
Leads my young fancy to the God above ;
From the new flow'r a wholesome moral draws,
Pointing the mind to nature's perfect laws ;
From the new-gilded, swinging tavern sign
Reads me the storied wickedness of wine ;
Tells me—alas ! that it should make me start—
My broken Sabbath is her broken heart.

And now our humble country church is seen,
The pride and landmark of the village green,
Oft on the distant trav'ler's sight it broke,
Girt with a stately ancestry of oak ;
Still to my view its whiten'd gables rise,
Like an uplifted ark against the skies.





High on a hill in lofty peace it stands,
And all the vale for miles around commands,
Where morn's first sparkle quivers on its spire
And the old dial marks an hour of fire.
Beneath its caves the swallow builds her nest,
And, with her brood, unhunted, finds a rest,
By instinct taught to freely harbor there,
Nor fear the men who come to kneel in pray'r.

We enter silently the holy place,
And softly tread the aisle with rev'rent pace ;
No velvet cushions yawn for pamper'd ease,
No pictured windows glow, the rich to please ;
Smooth seats of pine receive the honest swains,
And God's own sunshine tints the crystal panes.
The swarthy artisan, the son of toil,
Who works in metals, and who tills the soil,
As brothers meet within the sacred hall,
The God they worship is the Lord of all,
And He, petition'd oft, will understand,
As well the darker as the whiter hand.
Nor all alone these men devout appear,
The village Squire and Doctor both are here ;
While mothers, wives, and daughters sit between
And lend refinement to the solemn scene.

Now hush'd is ev'ry sound above a breath,
And e'en the children are as still as death ;
The Village Pastor at his desk appears,
The faithful minister of three-score years ;
His hoary locks in snowy waves descend,
And to his features grace majestic lend,
While from his eyes unnumber'd virtues shine,
With love for man, half human, half divine.
And when to Heav'n he sends the earnest pray'r,
An hundred echoes meet it in the air—
Soul answers soul beneath the Sabbath sun,
But his the strain that blends them into one.
Each word is plain, the simplest of its kind,—
And well adapted to the weakest mind ;
No sounding phrases mystify the truth,
Age tastes the fountain purifying youth.
God hears His servant from the throne on high,
And writes an answer in his tearful eye.
Mark, how he lingers o'er the sacred page,
And tempers Scripture with the thoughts of age ;
With quivering lips the hope of man is given—
Good will on earth—eternal joy in heaven ;
While, sadly solemn as a funeral knell,
His words portray the endless woes of hell.

Not with political device and tone,
Not with a studied sanctimonious drone,
The fame of eccentricity he seeks,
But speaks the truth, as truthful nature speaks ;
Leaves state affairs to those who make the laws,
And values honesty beyond applause.

As, from his desk, the holy man descends,
Each fond parishioner his hand extends ;
Each little child is, by its mother, led
To gain the friendly pat upon the head ;
Each maiden bows, his blessing to implore ;
Youth lines his homeward passage to the door ;
Old dames, with grave garrulity, impart
That they have got his sermon all by heart ;
On ev'ry face there shines a joy subdued,
Nor cares, nor sorrows, on the scene intrude ;
Peace floats on sunny pinions o'er the place,
And man exhibits his sublimest grace.

Alas ! that so much innocence should fade ;
But Life's a taper, wasting into shade.
Those dear, familiar faces, one and all,
Now sleep in death, beneath a flow'ry pall :

Heav'n gather'd in the mortal loans it made,
And simple goodness was the interest paid.
The single-hearted Soldier of the Cross
Fought not for earthly honors, praise, or dross ;
His badge of honor was his hoary hair,
His armories, the ocean, earth and air ;
His sword the Scripture, honesty his strength,
The world his field, throughout its width and length ;
Truth was his password, Reason his defence,
And all his foes, the foes of common sense.
His were the tactics ever sure to win—
For Virtue smiles, and tears alone for sin ;
These he dispensed wherever doom'd to roam,
Until his Great Commander call'd him home.

And now strange forms are crowding on the stage,
I hear the murmurs of another age ;
Through vaulted arches studied tones arise
And dainty fingers dally with the skies ;
Dark, and more dark, the gentle visions grow—
Clouds, black as night, their deep'ning shadows throw ;
Fainter and fainter, comes the distant sound—
Dim forms are sinking in the gaping ground ;
There dawns a consciousness of mortal pain—
The light goes out—and I am old again !

LEONORE.

I SAW her in the bright saloon,
As I had seen before
The haughtiest women of the land,
• But none like Leonore ;
So wrapt in living poetry
Was ev'ry grace she wore.

The pure camellias in her hair
Were not so fair as she ;
And in the roses of her cheeks
My eager eyes could see
The banners of a regal pride,
That said : Come worship me !

The jewels on her brow of snow,
 Beneath the chandeliers,
Seem'd like the record of a life
 Inscribed in frozen tears
Upon a marble temple's front,
 With gold to link the years.

I heard the rustling of a robe,
 Like leaves before the rain,
And throngs roll'd back on either side,
 Like waves upon the main
When some mermaiden walks at night,
 With Tritons in her train.

And then, a light, familiar step,
 Prophetic fancy heard,
As gentle in its airy fall
 As that of woodland bird;
Yet ev'ry tap upon the floor
 Was an unspoken word!

I saw a smile divide the lips
 That oft had honor'd mine;
But there was something in the smile
 My heart could not define;

So superficial was its beam,
And yet so near divine.

She spoke, but in an alter'd tone
From that I once had known
When she, in other robes than these,
Had smiled on me alone,
And whisper'd, oh ! so tenderly,
That she was all my own.

We parted, e'en as strangers part
Upon a foreign shore ;
When each is to the other dead,
As they had been before
The paths of their existence met,
To meet again no more.

I saw her once again that night,
When one was called to sing
A ballad of the olden time,
Of wooing and a ring,
And of a bride unsullied turn'd
Into a guilty thing.

O Leonore ! my lingering hope
Was blighted with the tear
That wash'd thy fatal pride away,
And roll'd, as thou didst hear
A father's hopeless sorrows, borne
In music to thine ear.

And all my love was banish'd then,
But pity took its place ;
For in the silent agony
Reflected in thy face,
I saw, beneath the badge of shame,
An old, familiar grace.

THE MIRROR.

"Inspicere tanquam in speculum, in vitas omnium jubeo."

SPEAK! thou pale and staring Phantom,
From the picture in the glass;
Now is the prophetic moment,
Tell me what shall come to pass!

Thou art looking to the future
With those sunken eyes of thine,
And the fire reflected in them
Kindles on a distant shrine.

From the valley of the Present,
Rank with unavailing tears,
Is there not an upward passage,
Paved with future years on years?

Leading upward o'er the mountain
In whose shade I wander now ?
Leading upward, leading onward
To the Temple on its brow ?

Tell me, silent seer, I pray thee,
Is there not a pow'r sublime,
That can make a yearning mortal
Rise superior to his time ?

Must the spectres of our sorrows,
Real in the erring Past,
Keep so near us in the present
That their chill is forward cast ?

Can the memory of a harsher
Note upon the spirit's strings,
Drown the music of the Heaven
Deathless aspiration brings ?

Can a chain of cold denials,
Growing greater as they pass,
Fetter down a soul for ever ?
Speak ! thou Phantom of the glass.

Must the naked soul be measured
By a standard rear'd of pelf?
Ope those mocking lips and tell me,
Oh, my torturing Second Self!

Thou art silent as the marble
Bearing many a sculptured name,
Once of those who ask'd such questions,
Dying ere their answers came ;

But a shadow thin, uncertain,
All thy features plays about,
And within thine eyes reflected
Is the torture of a Doubt !

Get thee gone, thou evil prophet !
Mine shall be a nobler lot
Than thy coward look would make it ;
Get thee gone, and mock me not !

Vain the words. That mocking Phantom
Evermore will linger there,
Chilling all my mortal being
With its cold and Doubting stare ;

Ever near me, right before me
While I pause and when I pass;
And, howe'er I strive to shun it,
All the world is still its glass.



OUR GUIDING STARS.

THE planets of our Flag are set
In God's eternal blue sublime,
Creation's world-wide starry stripe
Between the banner'd days of time.

Upon the sky's divining scroll,
In burning punctuation borne,
They shape the sentence of the night
That prophesies a cloudless morn.

The waters free their mirrors are ;
And fair with equal light they look
Upon the royal ocean's breast,
And on the humble mountain brook.

Though each distinctive as the soul
Of some new world not yet begun,
In bright career their courses blend
Round Liberty's unchanging Sun.

Thus ever shine, ye Stars, for all !
And palsied be the hand that harms
Earth's pleading signal to the skies,
And Heav'n's immortal Coat of Arms.

THE MADMAN.

GO count the glimm'ring lanterns of the sky,
And be thou priest of all their mystic rites ;
That when the world shall ask—What makes them fly
Through boundless space, nor blend with other lights ?
Thy tongue, with subtlety, may show their flights
To be obedient to a set of rules
Laid down by learned men, who make the nights
Their hours of study, and do teach in schools
That ancient scholars were less wise than modern fools.

Mark well the current of a woman's thought,
When, on his knees, the master of her heart
Pleads, with the eloquence his love hath taught,
For one short word ; and see her quickly start,

As though 'twere unexpected on her part ;
And see her shun the form she longs to press,
And see her practice a defiant art—
Then tell me, if the riddle thou canst guess,
Why says she falsely “ No,” while her fond heart says “ Yes ?”

But who can read the human mind, and tell
How all its qualities should order'd be ?
And how arranged, its secret springs work well,
And how disorder'd by insanity ?
Oh ! who shall justify the vanity
Of those who boast of reason, and will show
That, in the system of humanity,
The mind is darken'd, when it does not glow
With the reflected light of other minds below ?

I've seen a madman ; and they call'd him so
Because he scorn'd the ways of other men ;
Yet, as he walks his dungeon to and fro,
His pride is like the lion's in his den ;
And you would style them prince and subject when
His jailor enters, to inquire of him
If he has any orders there and then,
Which, being answer'd, may assuage his whim ?
But you shall hear how I did chance to meet with him.

'Twas in a madhouse ! Do not start, good friend,—
I am not mad, nor even like to be
(Though there are many people who pretend
That I am crazed, because my words are free).
I only went to visit ; just to see
How the poor maniac differ'd from the man
Of Reason ; and how his philosophy
Went roving from the nicely order'd plan
That Fashion dictates, since its potent reign began.

The keeper was a jolly fellow, born
With a broad stationary laugh upon his face,
That age to countless wrinkles deep had worn ;
And, as he guided me about the place,
He jested oft, and with a homely grace,
Upon the creatures held in bondage there ;
And dwelt upon the evils of his race,
With such a laughing and triumphant air,
That one might almost think he gloried in despair.

"Yonder," said he, "you see that female dress'd
In bits of carpet, and a crimson skirt ?
Well, she was once with twenty lovers blest,
But—would you b'lieve me ?—the confounded flirt

Just play'd with all, until their hearts were hurt,
And then she sent them sighing from her side,
And told the story in a manner pert;
But, sir, she spoil'd her chance to be a bride—
And here she is at last, and here will she abide.

“That fellow was a poet, and I hear
He wrote good verses—or, at least 'tis clear
He thought so—but some surly critic's sneer,
Sent him to Boston first; then he came here.
Oh! you should hear him talk of 'Jenny, dear,'
And all the orange blossoms in her hair,
And how he honestly believes her tear
To be a dew-drop, fragrant, and as fair
As ever 'took its flight' through 'Eden's'—something—'air.' ”

“Here's an old maid.—Law, Betty, don't be mad
(But she *is* mad, sir, as a hare in March),
I'm sure this single gentleman is glad
To meet a lady graceful as a larch.
Ah, sir! (aside) for all she looks so arch,
She is as crazy as a bug in bed;
And daily covers all her head with starch,
Because she fancies that her hair is red.
Poor thing! she's only mad because she cannot wed.

“ And there’s a lawyer—such a lively chap !—
Who’s always arguing some mighty ‘ cause ;’
And sometimes takes that dog upon his lap,
And talks to it about the ‘ Statute Laws,’
As though the animal, instead of paws,
Had hands to furnish an enormous fee ;
Or, as a pris’ner, long’d to find some clause
That might entitle him to liberty.
Oh ! he’s the strangest man—and mad as mad can be.

“ But here’s the wildest madman of them all—
You see we have to bind him with a chain.
He has a notion that the sky would fall
If he, as emperor, should cease to reign ;
In fact, sir, he is hopelessly insane,
And raves so strangely in his frantic way,
That all attempts to quiet him are vain
Until the fit has left him for the day.
Just speak to him, good sir, and see what he will say.”

A wreck of manhood stood within a cell,
Where endless night with the inconstant morn
For mast’ry strove ; and from his waist there fell
An iron chain, that in its writhes had torn

Great, gaping wounds, and on his limbs had worn
The brand of infamy—a felon's brand.
His robe was rags, his beard was all unshorn,
And like a vulture's talon was his hand—
Yet proud as king of countless kingdoms did he stand!

“Why are you here?” respectfully I said;
For there was something in his aspect then—
A crown of nature on his fallen head—
That gave the fetter'd madman in his den,
An air superior to common men.
I felt as they who ruin'd temples see,
And own the influence of past ages, when
Each pillar tower'd in matchless symmetry,
And ev'ry hall echo'd the tread of royalty!

The madman heard me with a nervous start,
And glared upon me with his blazing eyes,
Then placed a wither'd hand upon his heart
(Or where the heart of reasoning people lies),
As one tormented with strange terror, tries
To close his bosom 'gainst a full belief
Of some dread woe that on a rumor flies—
And, in his fear, scarce comprehends his grief.
Thus stood that human wreck upon misfortune's reef.

“Why came I here!” he said; while from his lips
The froth went streaming o’er his matted beard,
And thence upon his breast: “Why come the ships
Unto their ports? Because by MAN they’re steer’d.
I am a ship; and when I boldly veer’d
From Custom’s pathway and his common home,
Men seized my vital tiller, loudly jeer’d,
And to the port of madness made me come!
But I defy them all—Prince, King, and Pope of Rome!”

“He raves!” the keeper whisper’d. “Let us go!”
“Not yet,” I answer’d; for a mystic spell
Was stealing o’er my senses; and the woe
Of him before me in that dreary cell,
Was like the shadowy waters of a well
Wherein I saw familiar features, fraught
With the strange meaning of an hour when fell
A midnight blackness on my world of thought,
And all my inmost soul its dark contagion caught:

“Tell me the tale,” I mutter’d, in a tone
So deep in its intensity, and wild,
That I did scarcely know it for my own.
And then the madman shook his head and smiled—

But such a smile! It was of mirth defiled
With the new traces of a thousand tears—
Each tear of some dread agony the child—
A smile that Death in ghastly triumph wears;
One gleam of wrinkled light upon a storm of years!

“Hear me!” he shouted. “Hear the wondrous tale
That might confound a chicken-hearted slave,
And make him shudder, and his cheek turn pale;
But if, like me, thou dost not fear to brave
A world of fools, nor findest in each grave
A ghost to haunt thee in its winding-sheet,
Thou shalt exult with me when I do rave,
And glory in the wonders I repeat;
For we are man and man—in sympathy we meet!

“I loved a maiden once—a gentle girl,
Bred in a valley where the sloping hills
Reflect each other’s beauties. Like a pearl,
In a rude shell, I found her; and the rills
That mock the birds of summer with their trills,
Were not more pure, more fresh, more bright than she.
Hers was a beauty that the bosom thrills
With the love-notes of its own ecstacy;
And her fond guileless heart knew me, and only me!

“ We stood before the altar at the hour
When all the west is planted thick with light,
And ev’ry cloud is bursting into flow’r,
And blooms amid the banners of the night.
We wedded, and I left her ; for the sight
Of her sweet blushes so o’ercharged my soul
With wondrous joy, that I was madden’d quite,
And in my madness could not brook control ;
Man knew not half my bliss—God, only, knew the whole !

“ I wander’d in the fields, yet saw no earth,
Nor sun, nor sky ; for I was in a dream
That gave unto another world a birth.
O God ! had this world been as that did seem !
But I awoke, to find the subtle beam
Of madness fled. I had been dreaming long ;
But Reason seized again the rule supreme,
And as she checked fond Love’s delusive song,
My guilty soul was conscious of a heavy wrong !

“ I sought my bride again. She smiled on me,
And placed her little hands within my own,
And kiss’d my forehead so confidingly,
That I could scarce repress the rising groan.
O God ! Why had I not a heart of stone,

To save her blessed spirit from the taint
Of selfish love, that, in its wild desire,
Would see the mortal only in the saint,
And make a pretext of its holy fire !
But I wash'd out my guilt—the sacrifice was dire !

“ They led her to her couch, and when I sought
The old oak chamber, at a later hour,
Angels of slumber o'er her soul had wrought
The subtle influence of their gentle pow'r
And woven dreams. The minutes that devour
The night, were nearing Twelve ; above the hill .
The moon swept slowly, and her silver show'r
Stream'd softly, coldly, o'er the window-sill ;
Tired Nature slept in peace, and all was hush'd and still.

“ With noiseless step, I cross'd the chamber floor,
Drew the pale curtains of the couch aside,
And, like a troubled spirit on the shore
Of a lost Heav'n, I look'd upon my bride.
Oh ! she was beautiful ! and, in the pride
Of fearless innocence, she calmly slept,
Like rosebud on a lily open'd wide ;
And, as a dream-laugh o'er her features crept,
The fountain of my tears flow'd over, and I wept !

"But as I wept, I saw a bitter sneer
Drawn with a moonbeam on a spectral face
Press'd close against the glass. 'Fool! dost thou fear
To rise superior to thy coward race?'
A taunting echo rang about the place,
And my great purpose was revived again!
'I do not fear!' I cried. 'God grant me grace
To yield to thee a soul without a stain;
She came unstain'd to me, and spotless shall remain!"

"I bent above her, and she gave a start—
Like one affrighted—softly breathed my name,
Then slumber'd on. Then I did act a part
That might eclipse a Christian martyr's fame,
And make the laurell'd hero blush for shame;
Down through the snowy temple of the soul
I struck the glitt'ring blade, and quench'd the flame
Of a young life, that all the brightness stole
From my own martyr'd heart, as the red drops did roll!"

"They call'd me *MADMAN* for it, fetter'd me,
And shut me in a prison—where I stand
To bear the bitter mockings of the free,
And live a by-word for a darken'd land!"

Virinius slew his *child* with his own hand,
To save her from a tyrant ; I did slay
My *bride* to save her from *myself* ! How grand
The deed ! Yet worlds their lasting homage pay
Unto the Roman hero—but I'm MAD, they say !”

The madman paused, and turn'd away his face—
As though he would not have a stranger know
That he could weep. Then, with the haughty grace
Of one to empire born, he bade me go
Forth from his royal presence ! Bowing low,
I left him in his solitary den
To weep, and rave, and live, and die, as though
He to the world unknown had ever been,
And, being curs'd by God, was doubly curs'd by men !



THE DEATH OF THE ROSES.

WHO shall tell the roses now
Where their missing loves are lying,
Buried under softest snows,
By the sweetest torture dying,—
Dying, like the morning's ray
Lapt and lost in perfect day?

Dainty Zephyr, cherish'd oft
By the flow'rs to their undoing,
Have you found the Roses' grave
Here, or there, in all your wooing,—
Wooing wide and wooing free
Constant to Inconstancy?

Brief the tale the Zephyr tells,
How the pair he half-discover'd

Lurking 'neath a virgin's veil,
As about the place he hover'd,—
Hover'd, till in orange sprays
Quick he lost them from his gaze.

Orange Blossoms, frail as fair,
Loved of all who wear the kirtle,
Know ye if the Roses lost
Kissed the Cypress, or the Myrtle?
Myrtle, ask the Cypress, thou,
Where the Roses died, and how?

This the tale the blossoms tell,
Whisp'ring one unto the other,
Softly, softly breathing low
As they would the secret smother,—
Smother from the blue-bell's ear,
Bent in expectation near.

On the cheeks the lover wed
Grew the Roses; there they perish'd
When, before the altar, Love
Rivals to the Roses cherish'd,—
Cherish'd Lilies for the Bride,—
Then and there the Roses died!

THE GENERAL'S WIFE.

SHE hears the thunder of his guns.

Deep-crashing o'er the lowland farms,
And all the ardor of her soul
Goes forth to greet her lord in arms;

And where in peril's thickest round

He stems the surging hostile hordes,
Her spirit walks the flashing deep
To guard him through a wind of swords.

Though sways the balance of the strife,

From losses near, to gains afar,
Her Faith shines steadfast on his head,
As on the ship the Polar Star.

Let brother question brother's might,
And man's distrust of man be rife,
'Tis not in Woman's heart to doubt
The pow'r that won and rules the wife.

Through all the battle's storm of sounds,
The crash of death, the host's rejoice,
In that, she hears his sabre-stroke,
In this, his own triumphant voice.

And if for grace the foeman bend,
Though ev'ry lip with fury foam,
His hand falls softly through her pray'r,
As on his Darling's head at home.

So, should the land refuse to praise,
An ocean shall his glory be,—
A Hope as tireless as the wave,
A love as boundless as the sea.

THE ANCIENT CAPTAIN.

THE smiles of an evening were shed on the sea,
And its wave-lips laugh'd through their beardings of
foam ;
And the eyes of an evening were mirror'd beneath
The shroud of the ship and her home.

And as Time knows an end, so that sea knew a shore,
Afar in a beautiful, tropical clime,
Where Love with the Life of each being is blent,
In a soft, psychological Rhyme.

Oh, grand was the shore, when deserted and still
It breasted the silver-mail'd hosts of the Deep,
And like the last bulwark of Nature it seem'd,
'Twixt Death and an Innocent's sleep.

But grander it was to the eyes of a knight,
When, clad in his armor, he stood on the sands,
And held to his bosom its essence of Life—
An heiress of titles and lands.

Ah, fondly he gazed on the face of the maid !
And blush-spoken fondness replied to his look ;
While heart answer'd heart with a feverish beat,
And hand press'd the hand that it took.

“ Fair lady of mine,” said the knight, stooping low,
“ Before I depart for the banquet of Death,
I crave a new draught from the fountain of Life,
Whose waters are all in thy breath.

“ The breast that is fill'd with thine image alone,
May safely defy the dread tempest of steel ;
For while all its thought, are of love and of thee,
What peril of Self can it feel ?”

He paused ; and the silence that follow'd his words,
Was spread like a Hope, 'twixt a Dream and a truth :
And in it, his fancy created a world
Wrought out of the dreams of his youth.

Then shadows crept over the beautiful face
Turn'd up to the sky in the pale streaming light,
As shadows sweep over the orient pearl,
Far down in the river at night.

"You're going," she said, "where the fleets are in leash,
Where plumed is a knight for each wave of the sea,
Yet all the wide Ocean shall have but One wave,
One ship and One sailor for me!"

He left her, as leaveth the god of a dream
The portals that close with a heavier sleep;
And then, as he sprang to the shallop in wait,
The rowers push'd off in the Deep.

A FABLE FOR STRATEGISTS.

THE Animals once, in a classical age,
Were fill'd with the wildest affright,
Because of a *Serpent* a hundred yards long,
That came on a mission of spite
One night,
And stretch'd himself out in their sight.

The donkey, the sloth, the hyena, and bear,
The foxes, the monkeys, and cows,
Join'd in with the rest of the animal herd
In uproar sufficient to rouse
Bow-wows
From dogs—and from felines mee-yows.

It chanced that old Jupiter, passing that way,
Was call'd to the spot by the sound,
And, straightway establishing criers and court,
He summon'd the creatures he found
Around,
Requesting them all to expound.

Old Leo, the Lion, who couch'd in a bush,
Too sick and too feeble to roar,
Made bold to explain, in a dignified way,
The very lamentable bore—
And more—
Of having a snake at their door.

“And old as I am,” mutter'd Leo the lame,
“Myself would the reptile defy ;
But snakes, as your Worship undoubtedly knows,
Require an opponent that's spry ;
And I
Can better devise than apply.

“Permit me to say, that your Worship should name
A champion over the rest,
And give unto him, by your magical pow'r
What weapon he claims is the best

To wrest
The Snake from the family nest."

Then Jupiter nodded a mighty consent,
And, speaking in thunder, said he:
"What animal here feeleth competent quite
To conquer the Serpent—if he
From me
Can have what he wishes for, free?"

Up spoke a young Monkey of average size,
With manner peculiarly bold,
"Yon Serpent I'll conquer and drive to the wall
Before he's another hour old,
All told—
Provided your promise you hold.

"You see that the Serpent's a hundred yards long,
With so many yards to assail,
And what I require to be even with him,
That I in the fight may prevail—
Not fail,
Is fifty more yards to my Tail."

'Twas plain, from the look upon Jupiter's face,
He marvelled that creature so mean
Should push himself forward to hazard the feat,
Where so many nobler were seen ;
But e'en
A Monkey's a Monkey, I ween.

So, moving his court, with spectators and all,
Quite close to the enemy's land,
Great Jupiter motion'd the **MONKEY** to take
His place, where he'd chosen to stand
So grand,
And work out the scheme he had plann'd.

The **MONKEY** obey'd, with a confident air,
And scarce had he faced at the foe,
When, giving a glance at his flexible **TAIL**,
He found it commencing to grow,
You know ;
For he had bespoken it so.

'Till fully six coils had been added thereto,
He held it in train with a paw ;
But then for his strength rather heavy it weigh'd,
And he on the ground let it draw—

O law !

Such Tail mortal man never saw.

To fifty full yards it extended at last,

All curl'd on the earth in a pile :

And there was the Serpent, and here was his foe,

Both staring in comical style

The while,

As though 'twas a joke to beguile.

The Monkey he chatter'd, the Monkey he fuss'd,

When Jupiter thunder'd—"Begin!"

But there was the SERPENT, and here was his foe,

With hiss making answer to grin—

As in

Such manner each reckon'd to win.

The Animals titter'd, the Animals growl'd,

And even the birds in the tree

Alternately croaked with impatience of note,

And chirp'd in the greatest of glee

To see

How comic 'twas getting to be.

Great Jupiter frown'd at the battle's delay
And thunder'd "Begin!" as before;
But there was the SERPENT and here was his foe,
Each eyeing the other one o'er,
And o'er,
And—not doing anything more.

The Monkey he started, the Monkey fell back,
His tail was too heavy to drag;
He lifted a number of coils in his arms,
And struggled along with a fag
And lag,
As limp as an overwash'd rag.

The venomous **SERPENT**, still eyeing his foe,
Commenced to curl up from behind,
And back jump'd the **MONKEY**, entangled in tail,
And chatter'd, "O Jupiter kind,
I find
More TAIL I must have to unwind!"

Now Jupiter saw and the Animals too,
He couldn't use all that he had;
But, willing to humor his champion still,
Proceeded, with feelings half glad,

Half mad,
Ten yards to the fifty to add.

The **MONKEY** he loaded his shoulders with coil,
And painfully started anew ;
Yet such was the weight of the pile on the ground,
He stopp'd ere he'd gone inches two,
And threw
His coils, like a Texan lasso.

The **SERPENT**, still keeping an eye on his foe,
Sway'd cunningly backward a bit ;
And back hopp'd the **MONKEY**, entangled in tail,
Scarce knowing if he'd made a hit
With it,
And frighten'd half into a fit.

The Animals titter'd, the Animals growl'd,
And Jupiter thunder'd—" Explain !"
" Indeed," sigh'd the **MONKEY**. " that Snake is so long,
To equal his strength in the main,
'Tis plain
A little more **TAIL** I must gain !"

Though Jupiter saw, and the Animals too,
Already it mock'd his control,
He added full twenty more yards to the **TAIL**,
That mounted immensely in scroll
On scroll,
A hopelessly complicate whole.

The **MONKEY** he loaded his shoulders with coils,
With others his body he wound ;
But scarce had he lifted his foot for a step,
When down they all fell on the ground
Around,
In snarls and confusion profound.

The **SERPENT**, still keeping an eye on his foe,
Indulged in an ominous snap ;
And loud scream'd the **MONKEY**, entangled in **TAIL**,
“ I've met with a grievous mishap,”
Poor chap—
To fancy a serpent would nap !

The animals titter'd, the animals growl'd,
And Jupiter threaten'd a breeze.
“ You see,” said the **MONKEY**, “ so long is the snake,
He reaches beyond me to seize—

With ease—
A little more **TAIL**, if you please !”

Though Jupiter’s patience was that of a god,
’Twas now very nearly worn out ;
Yet waved he the signal, thrice given before,
And twenty more yards, with a flout
About,
Were join’d to the **TAIL** at a sprout.

The Monkey he gazed at the mountain of coils,
So wondrously changing his base,
Then wildly and frantic’ly twisted and tugg’d,
To tumble it over the place,
Apace,
Where hiss’d the old Snake in his face.

And vainly he strove ; for the mountain of coils
Not only resisted him quite,
But firmly it held him enchain’d to the spot,
And on came the **SERPENT** to bite
The wight
That took so much **TAIL** for a fight !

The *Monkey* he gibber'd, the *Monkey* he shriek'd,
In fear of a horrible fate—
“O, Jupiter, what's to become of me now,
O mercy ! don't ponder and wait
Too late,
Or I shall be murder'd and ate !

A nod from the god, and a magical axe
One moment was seen in the air,
Then straight at the root of the wonderful **TAIL**
It flew—and the *Monkey* was bare
Of e'er
The least bit of tail he could wear !

And just at the moment this thing was achieved
The serpent, with croak like a frog,
Went off through the bushes, but left in his trail
Full half of his length in the bog—
A log,
With which he pretended to jog !

The animals titter'd, the animals growl'd,
The *Monkey* looked crush'd and forlorn ;
'Twas plain, from his bitter expression of face,
He wish'd that he'd never been born ;

Nor shorn,
Of what he so proudly had worn.

Then silence was order'd, and Jupiter turn'd,
And unto the Monkey said he :
" I gave you your way, and a very nice way
That way has been proved unto me
To be,
And ends—as we all of us see !

" As you're but a monkey, my sentence is light :
Go back to your kindred and friends,
And possibly you for a hero may pass—
As one who, to make his amends,
Pretends
'Twas Heaven that thwarted his ends !

The Animals, struck with a sentence so just,
To Jupiter raised an All Hail !
And cherish'd the lesson that ever it lies
In length of the Head to prevail—
Not fail,
And not in the length of the Tail,

THE ROMANCE OF THE OLD.

THOUGH bends the hoary head with years
 In reverential grace,
As bowing meekly unto God
 When nearest to His face ;
Yet lives there something of the child,
 One spark amid the cold,
To hallow with the warmth of youth
 The Romance of the Old.

Not all the throng of worldly cares
 That sadden life's decline,
Can leave the human heart without
 Some one Ideal's shrine ;

• For if Realities have proved
What childhood ne'er foretold,
Still clings the fiction's charm about
The Romance of the Old.

Oh lover, in thy blushing pride,
Oh sweetheart, in thy walks,
Turn not in angry haste away
Because an old man talks ;
But think the twinkle of his eye,
O'er jokes so often doled,
Reflects thine own romance within
The Romance of the Old.

The hand that hangs the Christmas Tree
With quaint, ingenious toys,
May lack the whiteness of the girl's,
The quickness of the boy's ;
Yet in the loving heart that bids
Such fruit the leaves enfold,
Are children's dreams, renew'd, to guide
The Romance of the Old.

I saw returning from a church
A fond and happy pair;
And He with look and step elate,
And She with modest air.
Behind them came two stooping forms
As happy;—but, behold!
They wept; for weeping marketh oft
The Romance of the Old!

To manhood in its hardy prime
And womanhood the young,
'Tis given perfect joy to show
By music from the tongue;
But tears refine the wither'd cheek
Where many a tear hath roll'd,
When tenderness through pleasure thrills
The Romance of the Old.

All blessings on the sacred head
That wears the silver crown,
And blessings on the shaking hand
That smoothes its brightness down;

And blessings on the shrunken lips,
To kindness, only, bold,
Whose very benedictions breathe
The Romance of the Old !

And whether at the hearth of Home,
Or in the world around,
Let's thank the Father of us all*
For wisdom so profound ;
That, as in Youth the blood is warm,
And as in Age 'tis cold,
The two are sweetly blended in
The Romance of the Old.



PSYCHE.

THY voice is in my dreams, O faithful love!

Its soothing accents, murmuringly low,
Bend to no words, but musically flow

In a fond influence; as the stars above
Syllable light, that would in sentence prove
Bright as the Sun; yet is not e'en the Moon.

Thine eyes are, like the camel's, soft and clear,
And deep with patience tenderly subdued,
As though an angel gazing through them view'd
Vistas of Heaven mirror'd in the blear,
Glimmering waves, that from afar appear
O'er the grey desert's solitary noon.

Thy touch is on my life ; thy hands unseen,
Blent with the glory shaded from thine eye
When thy soft glance steals upward to the sky
Pleadingly, meekly—keep my spirit clean,
Banishing stains, or making them to mean
Ashes from fire, or dust from purest air.

Thy form is ever with me, day and night ;
The city's crowds of evil and of good,
The cool, green chambers of the whisp'ring wood
Holding thee near, impalpable to sight,
Silently close, a sanctity to light
The bleeding Bible of a mother's pray'r.

Thy feet are on the path my heart would take,
When weary, desolate, and sick of man,
It turns to where its youthful roadway ran
Fairly to view, without a shape to break
Loneliness all ; yet, like a summer lake,
Blithe with the dimpling dancers of the Sun.

I lean on thee for rest, as one who feels
A heavy burthen mocking at his strength,
And of his journey knoweth not the length.

Nor where the ending ; but exhausted reels,
Pantingly weak, to where some turn reveals
Stones of a grave to plant his staff upon.

I know thou art not dead, nor living thou,
But borne an airy sculpture of the breath
Above the lilies motionless of death.
So much the tomb hath marblo from thy brow,
Veinless of pain, as life has lost but now
Of the white innocence of perfect-good.

O leave me not alone ; for losing thee,
I lose the tender manliness of one
Who, lest some flow'r be hidden from the sun
By his frail shadow cast upon the lea,
Thoughtfully turns to where his shade may be
Lost in the rustling twilight of the wood.

My spirit clings to thee, and in its spells
Of doubting all itself can worthy show
To hold thee steadfast, sadly come and go
Fancies of lingering, fainting, far farewells,
Mournfully clear, as through a fog the bells
Of some lost vessel sinking down at sea.

Still fondly bide with me ; for thou art mine,
As to myself a nobler self belongs,
The higher music dream'd in all my songs ;
What of my being might be half divine,
Rightfully grown, in Nature's first design ;
Not what I was, nor am, but what would be.

O keep me true to thee, that nought defile
A truth unstudied to my fellow-man,
Plann'd for myself ; as little children plan ;
Who, in their wisdom, selfish without guile,
Fancy the earth is happy when they smile,
And think the world is drowning when they weep.

Nearer to thee I come, as o'er me roll
The waved pulsations of ungrateful Wrong ;
Though with my shadow moves my grave along.
Nearer to thee for rest, as one whose goal
For ever is where ends his latest stroll,
On his own shadow lays him down to sleep.

THE MIDNIGHT WATCH.

SOLDIER, soldier, wan and grey,
 Standing there so very still,
On the outpost looking South,
 What is there to-night to kill ?

Through the mist that rises thick,
 From the noisome marsh around,
I can see thee like a shade
 Cast from something underground.

And I know that thou art old,
 For thy features, sharp and thin,
Cut their lines upon the shroud
 Damply folding thee within.

Fit art thou to watch and guard
O'er the brake and o'er the bog ;
By the glitter of thine eyes
Thou can'st pierce a thicker fog.

Tell me, soldier, grim and old,
If thy tongue is free to say,
What thou seest looking South,
In that still and staring way ?

Yonderward the fires may glow
Of a score of rebel camps ;
But thou can'st not see their lights,
Through the chilling dews and damps.

Silent still, and motionless ?
Get thee to the tents behind,
Where the flag for which we fight
Plays a foot-ball to the wind.

Get thee to the bankments high,
Where a thousand cannon sleep,
While the call that bids them wake
Bids a score of millions weep.

Thou shalt find an army there,
Working out the statesman's plots,
While a poison banes the land,
And a noble nation rots.

Thou shalt find a soldier-host
Tied and rooted to its place,
Like a woman cowed and dumb,
Staring Treason in the face.

Dost thou hear me? Speak, or move!
And if thou would'st pass the line,
Give the password of the night—
Halt! and give the countersign.

God of Heaven! what is this
Sounding through the frosty air,
In a cadence stern and slow,
From the figure looming there!

"Sentry, thou hast spoken well"—
Through the mist the answer came—
"I am wrinkled, grim, and old,
May'st thou live to be the same!

“Thou art here to keep a watch
Over prowlers coming nigh ;
I can show thee, looking South,
What is hidden from thine eye.

“Here, the loyal armies sleep ;
There, the foe awaits them all ;
Who can tell before the time
Which shall triumph, which shall fall ?

“O, but war’s a royal game,
Here a move and there a pause ;
Little recks the dazzled world
What may be the winner’s cause.

“In the roar of sweating guns,
In the crash of sabres cross’d,
Wisdom dwindles to a fife,
Justice in the smoke is lost.

“But there is a mightier blow
Than the rain of lead and steel,
Falling from a heavier hand
Than the one the vanquish’d feel.

“ Let the armies of the North
Rest them thus for many a night ;
Not with them the issue lies,
’Twixt the pow’rs of Wrong and Right.

“ Through the fog that wraps us round
I can see as with a glass,
Far beyond the rebel hosts
Fires that cluster, pause, and pass.

“ From the wayside and the wood,
From the cabin and the swamp,
Crawl the harbingers of blood,
Black as night, with torch and lamp.

“ Now they blend in one dense throng ;
Hark ! they whisper, as in ire—
Catch the word before it dies—
Hear the horrid murmur—‘ Fire ! ’

“ Mothers, with your babes at rest,
Maidens in your dreaming-land—
Brothers, children—wake ye all !
The Avenger is at hand.

- “Born by thousands in a flash,
Angry flames bescourge the air,
And the howlings of the blacks
Fan them to a fiercer glare.
- “Crash the windows, burst the doors,
Let the helpless call for aid ;
From the hell within they rush
On the negro’s reeking blade.
- “Through the flaming doorway arch,
Half-dress’d women frantic dart ;
Demon ! spare that kneeling girl—
God ! the knife is in her heart.
- “By his hair so thin and grey
Forth they drag the aged sire ;
First, a stab to stop his pray’r—
Hurl him back into the fire.
- “What ! a child, a mother’s pride,
Crying shrilly with affright !
Dash the axe upon her skull,
Show no mercy—she is white.

“Louder, louder roars the flame,
Blotting out the Southern home;
Fainter grow the dying shrieks,
Fiercer cries of vengeance come.

“Turn, ye armies, where ye stand,
Glaring in each other's eyes;
While ye halt, a cause is won;
While ye wait a despot dies.

“Greater victory has been gain'd
Than the longest sword secures,
And the Wrong has been wash'd out
With a purer blood than yours.”

Soldier, by my mother's pray'r!
Thou dost act a demon's part;
Tell me, ere I strike thee dead,
Whence thou comest, who thou art.

Back! I will not let thee pass—
Why, that dress is Putnam's own!
Soldier, soldier, where art thou?
Vanish'd—like a shadow gone!

THE HOPES OF DAYS GONE BY.

"O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

TENNISON.

IMPERIAL years, whose crowns on crosses rest.

Rich in all honors, deathless in all fame ;
Grand with the echoes of a God's reply
To the wild pray'r Ambition gives the breast !
Where is the Promise, purer far, that bless'd
The Hopes of Days gone by ?

Shadows of shades, that chill and mock the soul !
Spectres to Memory of the Unfulfill'd ;
Harsh with unkind reproaches to the eye
That looks on all, and misses yet the whole—
O flowers of youth that all your sweetness stole—
The Hopes of Days gone by !

Fond, foolish dreams ! of childish fever born ;
Vain as the airy cities of the clouds

By poet-fancy traced against the sky ;
Frail as the bubble on the new wave worn,
Yet pure and holy as the hush of morn—
The Hopes of Days gone by !

Years, weary years, with all the woes ye win
For throned Misfortune, there's a moment still

In anguish richer than to know and die—
When Boyhood ends, and Manhood's cares begin,
To feel and know that naught was real in
The Hopes of Days gone by !

OUR FLAG. •

I.

FLAG of my country! Standard of the free
In ev'ry land where dwelleth Liberty :
Thou fairest page the eye of Light can find,
Turn'd by the quiv'ring fingers of the wind ;
Charter of Hope by God to mortals given,
Bright with the planetary pomp of Heaven ;
Still to the patriot a recorded pray'r
Ling'ring in sweet suspense upon the air ;
Let me within thy broad protection stand,
And read thine honors for my native land.

II.

As from the shatter'd temple of the storm
Springs the grand arch of light in fairest form,—
Splits the black dome 'mid distant thunder's din,
And, through the shadows, lets the suushine in,—

So thou, my Country's Banner, did'st arise
From a dead storm whose battles shook the skies :
Rose, like the coming day's memorial shield
From a red sunset's torn and bleeding field,—
Dipp'd in the starry mine, whose clusters bright,
Drawn to a Union, beam'd the perfect light.

III.

Born of the Battle, nursling of the wind,
Symbol of strength unfurl'd for all mankind,
Through the dark hour that brings our brothers shame,
Still from our altars rise a beacon flame.
Pride of the air ! thou solitary spar,
Cast to the sea whose waves the whirlwinds are,
Scarce the faint wretch thy signal stars descries
When a new life is kindled in his eyes ;
Nerved with a might dividing fates to dare,
Boldly he cleaves the billows of despair,
Clasps thee in triumph to his heaving breast
And drifts securely to a haven rest.

IV.

Proudest of flags that mount the giddy mast,
Coy to the breeze, defiant to the blast,

Blazon'd aloft in ev'ry zone and clime,
Sheath for the sword, or badge for harvest time ;
Spread at command of cannon's deadly throat ;
Flutt'ring in play to merman's liquid note ;
Whether thy hues in polar vapors freeze,
Or blend with sunset on the southern seas,
Still thy broad folds shake deathless honors down
On the free head too proud to wear a crown ;
Still to God's image, be he bond or free,
Thou art a birthright of Equality !

V.

And shall this sacred leaf in Glory's tome,
Pluck'd from the volume storying Nature's dome
And a great nation's grand appeal to God
For the blest power to break a tyrant's rod,
Be by the hands of its own bearers riven—
Torn and despoil'd the heraldry of heaven ?
At the fell thought, what darkness falls around !
See the red streams flow gurgling from the ground !
Blood of our fathers, hallowing every spot,
Are the grand lives pour'd out in thee forgot ?
Shades of the mighty ! can thy dead eyes see
Brother to brother curse thy legacy ?



VI.

Hark ! from the North what sullen murmurs come—
And from the South wells up a mournful hum ;
Soft through the East the muffled drums resound ;
And in the West a dead command goes round.
Hark to the tramp of ghostly armies four
Through the long grass bedew'd with heroes' gore !
From the red hill where Warren's soldiers bled—
From the dark fens where slumber Marion's dead—
From the free plains where Scott's battalions fell—
From the dread field whose tale let Britons tell—
Onward they come, in all the dread array
Of a slain army on the Judgment-Day.

VII.

Well for the land whose madden'd sons would dare
Trample in dust the signet of the air—
Well for the land whose impious purpose, known,
Robs of its weight the grim funereal stone—
That as the hosts from beds of ages call'd
Turn their pale faces to the skies appall'd,
Full from the nation's Capitolic dome
Beam the Republic's stars amid the gloom :
Still they all shine, and still the stripes defend—
These for the foe, those for the trusty friend !

VIII.

As the dead army mark the starry shrine,
Sounds of thanksgiving thrill along the line ;
Swiftly the arms to set position come,
And the salute is answer'd by the drum ;
Then, as the templed shadows fall away,
Waves the old Flag in all the glow of day !
Gone are the hosts, no more to trouble men
Till the last trumpet sounds the march again.

IX.

Flag of the Fallen ! Standard of the Dead !
Thee let me follow with unwavering tread ;
Free from the touch of slave and tyrant fly,
And when thou fadest let a nation die !
Bond of the Freeman ! sacred with the blood
Shed by brave men for brave men's noblest good ;—
Say to the eye that looks to God and Thee
From a scorn'd trust, or fell captivity ;
Stripes for the traitor, foe, and Honor's ban,
Heav'n for the patriot and the honest man !

NO MORE.

HUSH'D be the song and the love-notes of gladness
That broke with the morn from the cottager's door—
Muffle the tread in the soft stealth of sadness,
For one who returneth, whose chamber-lamp burneth
No more.

Silent he lies on the broad path of glory,
Where withers ungarner'd the red crop of war.
Grand is his couch, though the pillows are gory,
'Mid forms that shall battle, 'mid guns that shall rattle
No more.

Soldier of Freedom, thy marches are ended—
The dreams that were prophets of triumph are o'er;
Death with the night of thy manhood is blended—
The bugle shall call thee, the fight shall enthrall thee
No more.

Far to the Northward the banners are dimming,
And faint comes the tap of the drummers before ;
Low in the tree-tops the swallow is skimming ;
Thy comrades shall cheer thee, the weakest shall fear
thee

No more.

Far to the Westward the day is at vespers,
And bows down its head, like a priest, to adore ;
Soldier, the twilight for thee has no whispers,
The night shall forsake thee, the morn shall awake thee
No more.

Wide o'er the plain, where the white tents are gleaming,
In spectral array, like the graves they're before—
One there is empty, where once thou wert dreaming
Of deeds that are boasted, of One that is toasted
No more.

When the Commander to-morrow proclaimeth
A list of the brave for the nation to store,
Thou shalt be known with the heroes he nameth,
Who wake from their slumbers, who answer their num-
bers
No more.

Hush'd be the song and the love-notes of gladness
That broke with the morn from the cottager's door—
Muffle the tread in the soft stealth of sadness,
For one who returneth, whose chamber-lamp burneth
No more.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

I.

THE solemn winds were sighing for the echoes dead and
dying,

That were wont to teach them music when their lutes
were on the trees ;

And the snow in tides was curling, dancing here and there,
and whirling,

Like the ashes of the lilies on the waves of ghostly seas.

II.

As a haunted mausoleum, 'neath the spell of a *Te Deum*,
That should lay the restless spirit of some disembodied
woe,

Stretch'd the world in awful slumber, while its oceans
pulsed the number
Of its years, upon that Christmas Eve within the Long
Ago.

III.

The trees, all wan, and tatter'd, spread their wither'd arms,
and shatter'd,
To receive their shrouds of ermine as they fell in fringes
down;
And each tall and shadowy steeple, keeping guard o'er hid-
den people,
Caught the heavenly benefaction in a mitre or a crown.

IV.

The awe-struck soul of Nature, turning softly from the
Future,
Look'd, in dreams, through weary ages back to a celes-
tial morn;
And while snows were sadly falling, and the wind to
wind was calling,
Felt the glory of that moment when Our Blessed Lord
was born!

V.

Far and wide the winds were shaken, that the winter's
gnomes had taken,
And they shaped and cast their feather'd coins on palace
and on cot ;
But though all the rest had slumber'd that the living world
had numbered,
Still one there was who waking felt, although he heard
them not.

VI.

Where crazy casements rattled, and a door uneven battled
With the grim and ice-mail'd spearsmen charging blindly
on the blast,
Dwelt the Watcher, old and lonely, with a bitter memory
only
To keep him present company and link him with the
past.

VII.

His garments, thin and tatter'd, o'er his poor old form
were scatter'd,
Like the shrivell'd leaves of autumn o'er a fallen forest
tree ;

And his hoary locks, that blended with a silvery beard untended,
Framed features pinch'd with years of want and cruel poverty.

VIII.

No faggot blazed to cheer him, and the empty cupboard
near him
Was eloquent of all that poor humanity can bear,
While burn'd a single taper, whose faint and sickly caper
Show'd hideous spiders, webb'd and toss'd upon the
frosty air.

IX.

But spite of all the squalor, and misery, and dolour
That mock'd the old man, like a curse, with prophecies
of fate,
Around him clung a glory, like some unwritten story
That sanctifies the ruins of an ancient temple great.

X.

Within the taper's glimmer, and while it faded dimmer,
A vague and taunting spectre of the world's misguided
dross,

He sat with all the seeming of one in memory dreaming,
And clasp'd in his poor, shaking hands, a little Golden
Cross.

XI.

Before the days of trouble, a woman wore the bauble—
A maiden true and holy as the spirit of a prayer ;
Angel wings in all her motions, and the souls of living
oceans
Prison'd in the eyes reflecting all the sunlight of her
hair.

XII.

A Father's Faith was round her, and in sunny chains it
bound her
To her young heart's best ideal of a Mother gone Above ;
But, alas ! the chains were broken, when a word in secret
spoken
Tore her soul from out its heaven with a troubled dream
of Love.

XIII.

Then came a waking morrow, when the depths of tearless
sorrow
Gave up their dead in curses that would stir a god to fear ;

And while Christmas bells were ringing, and the Christmas
 choir was singing,
The old man's Hope went down to death as waned the
 dying year.

XIV.

Upon the highway wending, a figure slight and bending,
Swept by the happier beggar, who in pity ceased to grieve ;
For the Curse had bred a terror in that stricken child of
 Error,
And she fled, she knew not whither, on that darksome
 Christmas Eve.

XV.

The old man, grim and lonely, waited—waited for this only—
A moment—e'en a second—in the valley of his days,
To make the Curse a Blessing—for his inner soul confessing,
Left his loss a double torture, with the Lost before his
 gaze.

XVI.

But the years roll'd on unheeding, deaf to all his hopes
 and pleading
That some pitying day would bring her, like God's pardon,
 to his door ;

And the Curse, in vengeance utter'd, ever round his being
mutter'd

In the likeness of a Shadow—Her last shadow on the
floor!

XVII.

There he sat, that Christmas Even, still the bann'd of Earth
and Heaven,

With the best and only token of the angel that had
been;

And the little Cross, uplifted, seem'd by God's approval
gifted

With power to weigh a father's tears against a father's
sin.

XVIII.

Lo! while yet he gazed in sadness, the winds in sudden
madness

Dash'd down the door between them and the hoary
watcher there,

And on the threshold kneeling, no gloom of night conceal-
ing,

He saw Her, as he knew her, with the sunlight in her
hair!

XIX.

"AT LAST!" The sentence spoken from a heart long lone
and broken

Told all the weary sorrows that a life had made its store.
The kneeling Spirit listen'd, the Cross with glory glisten'd;
And lo! the haunting Shadow faded from the dimming
floor!

XX.

"My sin is all forgiven! You pray for me in Heaven?"
The old man wildly whisper'd with his trembling lips
apart;
The Spirit grasps his fingers, a moment smiling lingers,
Then clasps the Sacred Symbol with his hands unto Her
heart!

XXI.

Like music born of Sorrow, but sweet as Love's to-mor-
row,
There came these words of comfort, and all lovingly they
fell:
"I am worthy now to wear it. Father—Mother—you can
spare it;
For your Child, through deep repentance, made the
Curse a Holy Spell."

XXII.

Then the old man's voice resounded, and from wall and
beam rebounded,

With grandeur, like the organ's swell, where ancient
worlds adore :

"Angel—Darling—let me grasp thee! Let these arms
once only clasp thee,"

And with arms outspread and groping, he fell forward to
the floor.

XXIII.

There crept a hush on Nature, and each dumb and browsing
creature

Turn'd its head with instinct reverence unto the sacred
East ;

And midway of the Heaven burst the imperial Star of
Even ;

For the tyrant Wind was broken, and the Wintry
storm had ceased.

XXIV.

The solemn bells were chiming, in a measured cadence tim-
ing

The quick pulsations of the world when dies Another
Day ;



And all the hosts of glory in sweet murmurs told the story
Of our Blessed Saviour's Coming, and the Manger where
He lay.

XXV.

The silent moon swept gleaming 'mid planet-torches stream-
ing,
And paved the floor with quaint designs of pearl and
silver bands ;
But still the old man sleeping, his Christmas Eve was
keeping
Prone in the ghastly radiance, with his face upon his
hands.

THE DYING YEAR.

DYING at last, Old Year!

Another stroke of yonder clock, and thou
Wilt pass the threshold of the world we see,
Into the world where Yesterday and Now
Blend with the hours of the No More To Be.

I saw the moon last night
Rise like a crown from the dim mountain's head
And to the Council of the Stars take way;
For thou, the King, though kinsman of the dead,
Sway'd still the sceptre of Another Day.

I see the moon to-night,
Sightless and misty as a mourner's eye
Behind a veil; or, like a coin to seal
The lids of Time's last-born to majesty,
Touch'd with the darkness of a hidden Leal.

Mark where yon shadow crawls
By slow degrees beneath the window-sill,
 Timed by the death-watch, ticking slow and dull ;
The tide of night is rising, black and still—
 Old Year, thou diest when 'tis at its full !

Aye ! moan and moan again,
And shake all nature in thine agony,
 And tear the ermine robes that mock thee now
Like gilded fruit upon a blasted tree ;
 To-morrow comes ! To-morrow, where art Thou ?

Would'st thou be shrived, Old Year ?
Thou subtle sentence of delusive Time,
 Framed but to deepen all the mystery
Of Life's great purpose ! Come, confess the crime,
 And man's Divinity shall date from thee !

Speak to my soul, Old Year ;
Let but a star leave its bright eminence
 In thy death-struggle, if this deathless Soul
Holds its own destiny and recompense
 In the grand mast'ry of a God's control !

No sound, no sign from thee?
And must I live, not knowing why I live,
Whilst Thou and years to come pass by me here
With faces hid, refusing still to give
The one poor word that bids me cease to fear?

That word, I charge thee, speak!
Quick! for the moments tremble on the verge
Of the black chasm where lurks the midnight spell,
And solemn winds already chant thy dirge—
Give Earth its Heaven, or Hell a deeper Hell!

Speak! or I curse thee here!
I'll call it YEA if but a wither'd twig,
Toss'd by the wind, falls rattling on the roof;
I'll call it YEA, if e'en a shutter creak,
Breathe but on me, and it shall stand for proof!

Too late! The midnight bell—
The crawling shadow at its witching flood,
With the deep gloom of the Beyond is wed,
And I, unanswer'd, sit within and brood,
And thou, Old Year, art silent—Thou art DEAD!

IN CAPITE.

*Who hath his birthright in immortal Song,
To disappointment should be doubly strong ;
In him 'tis strength to know that man is frail,
And greatness measured by a might to fail.*

*When, by a lofty inspiration driven,
His pen appears the lightning-tongue of Heaven,
He writes a dream,—and lo ! his lines have caught
The shadow only of a dreamer's thought.*

*To him all nature in the sunshine spread
Reveals a Poem yet divinely dead ;
He sees descend through clouds, in summer show'rs,
The souls transparent of the coming flow'rs ;*

*But when his hand, in mood sublime, would fain
Write out the Poem, penn'd in living rain,
All semblance fadeth as the moisture dries,
The rain remaineth only for his eyes.*

*One Verse alone all Poetry combines,
Its grandeur perfect in four simple lines :
Earth, Air, Fire, Water, or to bless or curse,
Its writer God, its name the Universe !*

CPSIA information can be obtained at www.ICGtesting.com
Printed in the USA
LVOW01s0410100114

368739LV00011B/404/P





KESSINGER PUBLISHING®, LLC
WWW.KESSINGER.NET

*UK-998-010